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THE

Life of Faith

In Time of

Trial and Affliction,

Cleared up and Explained,

FROM

HEB. X. xviii.

Now the just shall live by Faith.

By Mr. John Brown, Minister of
the Gospel. *H*



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AN
EPISTLE
TO THE
READER.

Christian READER,

Need not tell thee, that we must through much Tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God, as *Paul* and *Tarnatas* told the Disciples, whom they were confirming, and exhorting to continue in the Faith, *Acts 14. Verse 22.* Seeing my outward Profession of Christianity

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faith, thou art professedly willing to meet with such a Lot, CHRIST having expressly declared, *That if any Man will come after him, he must take up his Cross and follow him.* Mat. 10. verse 38. and 16 verse 24. Mark 8. verse 34. And if thou be following Christ in Truth, thou either hast already begun to taste of this Cup, or mayest shortly find in Experience, *That Bonds and Affliction abide such, as through Grace resolve to be blameless and harmless, the Sons of GOD without Rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse Nation, among whom they shine, as Lights in the World.* For wise and holy Ends, hath the Supreme and Absolute Sovereign, the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords determined, *That his Disciples and Followers, should, in one Measure or other, drink of this His Cup, and be baptized with the Baptism, wherewith he himself was baptized;* and it doth not become us to quarrel upon thi Account, how unpleasant soever

Suf.

to the Reader.

Suffering be unto the Flesh, and how sharp the Storm blow in our Face, but rather to stoop and adore ; yea, with a cheerful Submission, and hearty Acquiescence, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of Faith, who for the Joy set before him, endured the Cross ; despising the Shame, to follow such a Captain with Alacrity of Soul, rejoicing that we are counted worthy to suffer Shame for his Name. It is true, (as the Apostle saith *Heb. 12. v. 11.*) *No chastening, for the present, seemeth joyous, but grievous.* Nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable Fruit of Righteousness to them, which are exercised thereby : And the Faith of this (beside many other Soul-comforting, and Heart-strengthening Cordials, every where to be found in the Word) should steel us with a fixed Resolution to follow the L O R D, with full Purpose of Heart, and not to be ashamed of him before Men, howbeit we should be put to a resisting, unto Blood, striving, against Sin. As the

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Lord did fairly forewarn all, who would chuse him for their Captain, Head and Husband, of what they were to expect in his Company and in his Service and Warfare, that their embracing of him might be pure and single; so knowing what Reluctancy Flesh and Blood would have at this Way; how Corruption would on this Occasion boil up, and how Satan would improve this to his Advantage; and knowing withal how weak his Followers would be to stand, and to withstand all this Opposition inward and outward, he hath left in his Word such Store of sweet and refreshing Grounds of Joy and Consolation, that, if believed, and faithfully improved, might not only create a Satisfaction in the Soul with that Lot; but even fill it with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory. CHRIST will not have his Followers looking soure and sad, as if their Lot, when outwardly it would appear saddest, were not very far preferable unto the choicest Condition, that such as are Strangers and Enemies to

CHRIST,

to the Reader.

CHRIST, have in this World : And therefore hath he left, in his *Word*, such a rich Treasure of *Promises*, what of the hundred fold to be had, even with *Persecution* in this Life; what of inconceivable and inexpressible Good in the World to come, whereby the Believer may be made to sing thorough the darkest and dismallest Part of all the Valley of *Tears*, which he is to pass, ere he come Home, where he shall sigh no more.

How unsuitable then must it be, and how dishonourable to such a *Master*, when his Servants and Followers (for whom he hath made such rich Provision of all Necessaries, not only for their simple Being; but also for the comfortable and cheerful Well-being,) carrying, as if they served a thankless Master; and following him with no less Despatch and Discouragement, than if he had utterly forgotten them, and would not with one Look of his Eye so much as take Notice of them. This, sure, cannot but be reflected on with Sorrow and

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and Grief, as hugely dishonourable to
our L O R D, as discouraging to others,
and as tending to bring up an evil Re-
port of C H R I S T, and his Way, to the
rejoicing the Hearts of Enemites and
ill Willers, and to the weakening and
fainting of their own souls.

I grant, though Believers have a Well
full of all Consolation at Hand; yet
without divine Assurances of Light and
Spiritual Wisdom, they may be, as if
there were no such Thing, which shew-
eth the Necessity of a constant Adhe-
rence to, and Dependence upon him for
suitable Supplies, in the Day of Need;
that thereby they may have their Eyes
opened to see, *Where the Well is;* and
may be taught and helped to draw out
of these Wells of Salvation, what their
present suffering Case calleth for; and
when they become so weak and sickly,
that they cannot suck the Breast when
at their Mouth, he may milk in Conso-
lation, to the reviving of their Souls,
and strengthen them with Strength in
their Souls; for his Bowels are more ten-

to the Reader.

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der, than the Bowels of any Mother,
that ever was.

AND seeing it is so, the chief Care of his People, in a Day of Trial, should be, how to stand fast, and quite themselves like Men, in avowing and witnessing to the controverted and opposed Truths of CHRIST; their Care should be, how to be found faithful, and stedfast, in owning his Cause, and counting it their Glory to be his Witnesses upon such an Account; and as for through-bearing Strength and Consolation, leave that upon *Him*, who will not leave his Followers, (who in Singleness of Heart, desire to abide by Him, in the Hour of Temptation, and not deny him,) when their Case calleth for his Presence and Supplies; he will come in the due Season, and let them find that he is come, to their everlasting Joy and Consolation.

B E C A U S E it cannot but be necessary and useful to Believers, who either are in such a Condition already, or have nothing else to expect, if they resolve to abide faithful unto the End, to be consider-

An Epistle

dering what a Lite is to be had even in
manitold Deaths, for the Cause and Te-
stimony of J E S U S ; and to be meditat-
ing upon multiplied Grounds of Conso-
lation, which are stored up in the *Word*,
whereby they may be strengthned a-
gainst Temptations, fortified against the
Assaults of Satan, and his Instruments,
enabled to withstand multiterious Dis-
couragements from within, and from
without, and helped through the Blessing
of G O D to stand stedfast in the Faith,
blow the Storm, as it will. I have
therefore adventured to communicate
unto them, (as an Help in this Case)
some Thoughts of that *Life*, that they
are not only to hope for, but even cal-
led to labour for in such a Day: And
withal have adjoined some Remarks up-
on a few of these many Considerations,
that may contribute hereunto, purposing,
if the L O R D will; and if this Essay
find Acceptance, and shall contribute
any Thing unto this Design, to follow

forth

to the Reader.
forth this Matter, at more length here-
after, as Occasion shall offer. Farwell.

*Your Servant in the Work
of the Lord.*

JO. BROWN.

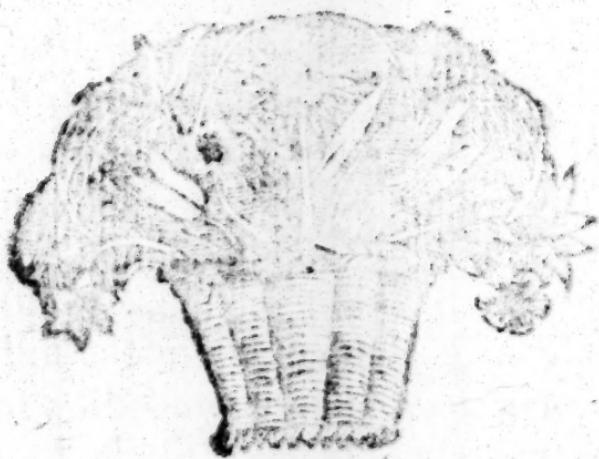


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THE
LIFE
OF
FAITH
IN
Time of Trials.

Hebr. X. 38.

Now the Just shall live by Faith.

C H A P. I.

The Words cleared, and some Generals proposed.

WHAT the Scope of the Apostle is here, is obvious from the foregoing Words: He hath been all along pressing them with all Sorts of Arguments and Motives to Stedfastness in the Faith, and Profession of the Christian Religion, which they had embraced, and which he feared many of them, through the Temptations of the Time, Persecutions upon the Account of that Profession, the Opposition made unto that Way by many of their Brethren, the Jews, and the subtle Insinuations and Arguments used by obstinate, or apostate Jews, to bring them back again to Judaism, and to a renouncing of the Way of Christianity should, after the Example of others, and by other

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Means

Means be made to renounce and fall away from.

He laid before them, Vers. 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31
the fearful and dreadful Judgments and Plagues
beyond what could be expressed, that Apostates
from the Truth, once received and professed, had
to expect and look for; and that in Words point-
ing forth the inconceivable Height and Hainousness
of the Sin, and the Inevitableness and Irremediableness
of that inexpressible Wrath and Vengeance, that was
awaiting Apostates: The very Reading whereof may
strike us with Horrour, and cause our Souls to trem-
ble. *For if we sin wilfully (that is, deliberatly, resolute-
ly, and fixedly) after we have received the Knowledge
of the Truth, (and so can pretend no Ignorance, but de-
part from and renounce the Truth, over the Belly of
Light and Conscience) there remaineth no more sacrifice
for Sins, (i. e. the Case of such is irremediable, they
have renounced, and willingly and wickedly de-
parted from the only VVay of Peace, Pardon and
Reconciliation with God; and there is no other Way
how their Sins can be blotted out; so that their Case
is desperate) but a certain fearful looking for of Judg-
ment and fiery Indignation, which shall devour the Adver-
saries, (whatever they may dream, and fancy to
obtain by their renouncing of the VVay of Christ
and by departing from the good VVay, which once
they had embraced, and professed; yet all, that in
Truth they have to look for, is Judgment, and
fiery Indignation, which shall devour the Adversi-
ties; where every VVord hath a weighty Emphasi-
sis; and this they are to look for, and to expect
certainly, and that accompanied with Fear, Dre-
and Horrour; so that their Torment and Horrour
shall commence and begin with their Beginnings to
depart and backslide: This certain, fearful and hor-
rible Expectation of the just and final Judgment, that
shall be pure divine Indignation, and fiery destruc-
tive Indignation, appointed and reserved for open
Rebels and Adversaries, shall be their Portion, and
that*

that in stead of Pardon, Peace and Reconciliation with God, through the Sacrifice of the Lamb of God) He that despised Moses Law died without Mercy, under two or three Witnesses, see Num. 15. 30. Deut. 17. 2. 8. & 19. 15. & 16. 19. & 13. 8. & 25. 12.) of how much sorcer Punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy (as if he had said, Can ye imagine, that when the Despisers of Moses's Law could not escape the Severity of Judgment, but behooved to die without Mercy or Pardon ; the Dispisers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ shall escape ? Nay, can you imagine how much worse, sorcer and more dreadful, the Judgment shall be that awaiteth such as apostatize from the Gospel ? Which Sin he vively describeth, and holdeth forth in its native Colours, how light so ever they accounted it to be, saying, Who hath trodden under Foot the Son of God, (it was a capital and unpardonable Crime, for any to have despised the Law of Moses : But how capital, hainous and fearful an Iniquity must it be, of an how more dreadful and deep crimson Die must it be, to take the Son of God, the only Son of God, and handle him so basely, as to conciliate him, and tread him under Foot, beyond which, an higher Expression of Indignity, Contempt, Wrath and Malice, cannot be shewn to any Person whatsoever ? And of this Nature and Complexion is their Sin, who apostatize from the Truth of the Gospel) and hath counted the Blood of the Covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy Thing ; (that is, looked upon Christ, while offering up himself a sacrifice to satisfie Justice for the Sins of his People, and shedding his Blood, (wherewith he confirmed the New Covenant and Testament ; and therefore the Cup, in the Sacrament, of the Lord's Supper, is called the New Testament in his Blood, 1 Cor. 11. Verse 25. Luke 22. Verse 20. and Christ's Blood of the New Testament, Mark 14. 24. Mat. 26. 28. See Heb. 9. 14. to the End) as a mere Malefactor, and his Blood to be no better than the Blood of the other Two,

that were crucified with him, though it was the Blood of God, the Blood of the Mediator of the New Testament, shed for the Redemption of Transgressions, the Blood of a spotless Sacrifice, and Blood that purgeth Consciences, Heb. 9. 14, 15. and though it was that Blood, wherewith this great high Priest was in a solemn Manner sanctified and accepted, as an Offering and Sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling Savour, Ephes. 5. 2. and received into Heaven it self, now to appear in the Presence of God for us, Heb. 9. 24. having put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself, Verse 26.) and hath done despite unto the Spirit of Grace? (that is, hath, with the highest Significations of Reproach, Contumely, Rage and Despite, rejected and denied all the Witnessings and Testimonies, which the holy Spirit gave unto the Truth of the Gospel, preached by Christ and his Apostles and Ambassadors, by Signs, and Wonders, and diverse Miracles, and Gifts of the holy Ghost, Heb. 2. 4. either ascribing these great and undeniable Miracles unto the Devil, to Beelzebub the Prince of Devils, as did the Pharisees, Mat. 12. 24. For which the Lord denounced their Sin unpardonable, as being the Sin and Blasphemy against the holy Ghost, which shall neither be forgiven in this World, nor in the World to come, Verse 31, 32. or denying them, and all the Fruits and Effects of this Gospel in Churches and in Souls, manifest in the manifold and rare Gifts, then poured out in Abundance; and in the heavenly and sanctifying Graces, working a wonderful Change in Souls to the turning of them from the World, and from Vanities to serve the living God , or both ; and accounting all but Delusions and Fanaticism,) For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his People, (See Deut. 32. 35, 36. Hereby he sheweth, that God, whose it is properly to render Vengeance, and who doth not fail to render a Recompence unto

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the wicked and malicious Oppressours and Injurers of his People, when he heareth, and judgeth the Cause betwixt them and their Enemies, would not suffer this high Indignity done to himself, to his only Son, and to his holy Spirit, to go away unpunished: We know, (saith he) what an one he is, how Just, Holy, Righteous and Zealous a God he is, with whom such have to do. And he further addeth) *It is fearful Thing, to fall into the Hands of the living God.* (It is a Matter that may strike Horrour in the Hearts of the stoutest and proudest of Rebels and Apostates, to consider, that it is not Man that they have to do with, but God; & God who is no dead Idol, or a sleeping, regardless and unconcerned God; but a living God, and a living God, who hath Hands and Arms of Power: In whose Hands and Arms of Wrath and Vengeance such must fall, who depart from the Truth, and turn their Back upon Christ and his Gospel: And what a fearful Thing is it, to fall upon the Edge of that Sword, and into his Hands, out of whose Hands, all the Power on Earth, and in Hell too, cannot deliver ?

From all which, we may take Notice of these four general and comprehensive Truths,

1. That let Apostates and such as depart from the Truth of God, once received and professed, think as little of their Sin of Defection and Backsliding from Christ and his Truths, as they will; and let them put what Face upon it they please, the Lord looketh upon it, as the dreadfiulest of Sins. No such Epithets find we put upon any Sin, in all the Book of God, as is here put upon this Sin: No Sin is capable of such highning Aggravations, as we find here mentioned, and Chap. 6. 6. Where the same Sin is spoken of. Apostates from the Truth do little consider this, how by their renouncing the Gospel, and departing from Gospel Truths, and Interests, they are crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh, and are putting him to an open Shame,

yea, they tread under Foot the Son of God, and count the Blood of the Covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy and common Thing, no better than the Blood of any other Man, yea or of a Malefactor, and do Despite unto, and rub Reproach and Contumelie upon the Spirit of God, in all his Condescensions of Love, and Works of free Grace. How horrid must this Iniquity be? How hateful and Abominable in the Eyes of the Lord? And how should the Consideration of this make it appear most hateful unto us; and a Sin, that, by all Means, we should labour to be free of? How should this cause us carefully keep from the least Beginnings of this Evil; not knowing where we shall siste our Course, if once we begin to depart from known and acknowledged Truths? How dangerous is it to sin wilfully, freely, deliberately, of choice, and of set Purpose, (as the Ethiopick Version translateth that Word, which we render wilfully,) and so deny, or depart from and renounce any Point of Truth, the Knowledge whereof we have once had, and received, and which we have once owned and professed, as the Truth of Christ? For, though this be but a partial Apostacie, yet it openeth the Door, and prepareth the Way for a total Apostacie; and who deliberately and of Choice, not meerly from a Surprisal of Fear, and the Violence of an unexpected Temptation, (as was in Peter's Case, when he denied his Master,) renounceth, denieth and opposeth one known Point of Truth, will not much stand to renounce and deny another upon the same Account, and when in the same Circumstances, if free Grace recover him not in Time; and from a second, it may come to a third, and that more fundamental. And who can promise to himself a sure Place of footing, when he is tumbling head-long, down a steep Hill? The surest Way is to stand, and resist the Devil in the very Beginning: For whom the Devil once gets a going before him, he will easily

easily cause to run. The Temptation how terrible so ever it appear, yet is really weakest in the Beginning; and the same Temptation continuing will increase in Strength and Force, as the Person yieldeth; because the more he yieldeth, the weaker he becometh, and so the more unable to withstand: Beside that, Conscience loseth its tenderness, and so the Man's Guard is broken: To speak nothing of what is most terrible, and ought most to be feared, that is, God's judicial, relinquishing and giving up such; and then where will they, or where can they stand?

2. Whatever great Things Apostates from the Truth may promise to themselves in the World by their defection from and relinquishing of Truth; and however they may judge themselves secure from all Punishment from Men; yet fearful Things have they to expect from the God of Vengeances, and that inevitably. *It is impossible (saith the Spirit of the Lord, Heb. 6. 4, 6.) to renew them again unto Repentance: And here it is said, There remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sin.* And why? Because they have renounced all Part, Portion, and Interest, in the one and only Sacrifice for Sins, having crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh, and trode him under their Foot, and accounted the Blood of the Covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, as a common unholy Thing; yea, instead of any Hope of Mercy, Remedy and Help, they have nothing in the Place thereof, but an *Expectation of Judgment*, and that no ordinary Expectation, but an Expectation that is fearful and terrible. The Syriack turn the Words thus, *But fearful Judgment is ready.* The Arabick thus. *But an Expectation of horrid Judgment.* The Ethiopick, *The Judgment is formidable:* All pointing forth, that the Judgment that such have to look for is terrible, dreadful and formidable, so that the very Forethought of it is such a Kind of Expectation as causeth Horrour and Dread. And moreover it is added, *Fiery Indignation, or, as in-*

the Original, The Zeal of Fire, the Rage of Fire, Zeal flaming all like Fire ; and that which is reserved for his Adversaries, and refractory Rebels, who shall be devoured and eaten up therewith. O ! who may stand before this devouring Fire of God's Indignation and Wrath ? Apostates may make a mock at Sin, and at this Sin of departing from the Truth ; but what will they say, when this fiery Indignation shall in Judgment reach them, and devour them ; and when the very Fore-apprehensions of it shall begin the horrour of Hell in their Soul ? There is a Judgment, and a Sentence of Judgment awaiting such; more dreadful and terrible then, and not once to be compared or named in one Day with the capital Sentence of Death inflicted under the Law, without all Mercy or Commiseration. It is a worse and sorcer Punishment ; and how much worse, and how many mo Talent Weights of Wrath and Indignation are in it, no Man can tell; of how much sorcer Punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy of, &c. As the Aggravations of the Sin are inconceivable great, so the Aggravations of the Judgment and Punishment, which such deserve, and expose themselves unto, who are guilty of this Sin, are above all our Comprehensions. And further, the Lord is their Darty, *to whom Vengeance belongs*, Psal. 94. 1. and who, as righteous Judge and Governour, will avenge himself upon these Enemies, and give a just Recompence, according to their crying and banious Iniquity. *We know him that hath said*, &c. The Lord hath assumed this to himself, as his just Prerogative, and he will maintain and manifest the same in the dreadful Effects thereof, in avenging himself, and his Son Jesus Christ, and his holy Spirit of Grace, on these Enemies, who have, in the highest Measure, and in the most arrogant Manner, rebelled against all the Three : *And again, The Lord shall judge his People*. Even that God, who is engaged to defend his People, and to judge them, and avenge them of their Enemies, will appear against

gainst those, who are Rebels to Father, Son and holy Ghost ; in a Manner and Measure suitable to their Iniquities. And Finally, *It is a fearful Thing to fall into the Hands of a living God.* And this such cannot escape, escape what they will at the Hands of Men : Flee whither they will, & as fast as they can, they shall fall at length into the Hands of a sin-revenging living God ; and how little so ever they either think of, or fear this now, it shall be found to be a tremendous and fearful Thing. Who can rescue, or deliver them out of his Hands, who is a living God ? Can their Hearts endure, or their Hands be strong, in that Day ? Will they wrestle themselves out of his Grips ? No sure.

3. In a Time of Defection, when there are many Temptations thereunto, many driving it on, Persecution and sharp Trials of Afflictions attending such as would fain be kept straight and steadfast, many falling off Piece and Piece, others staggering ; it were good, and it is seasonable and useful for one and other, to be holding these two looking Glasses before their Eyes, and to be dwelling much upon the Thoughts of these two grand things, formerly mentioned, to wit, the horrid Evil of the Sin of Apostasie and Defection from the Truth ; and the horrible and dreadful Consequences and sad Effects of Judgment, Wrath and fiery Indignation, that attend such a Course. The Hebrews here were in great hazard of falling from the Truth ; many were daily falling off, and apostatizing to Judaism, so me wholly, some in Part ; great was the Rage of their own Country-men, the Jews, against them, as we see, 1 Thess. 2. 14, 15, 16. where we see, with what Rage the corrupt infidel Jews opposed the Gospel, persecuting the Gospel churches in Judea, and the Apostles, and were contrary to all Men, forbidding the Apostles to speak to the Gentile ; that they might be saved, and so were filling up their Sins alway ; for the Wrath was come upon them to the uttermost : And what Afflictions these did meet

with, and were yet to meet with, the following Verses 32, 33, 36, 37. show. Now, While they are in this Condition and Hazard, we see, what Means the Apostle useth to keep them stedfast in the owning and openly avowing of the Truth: He layeth before them, both the hainousness of the Sin of drawing back, and also the sad and inevitable Judgments that will follow upon their Defection; whereby we see, that it is a seasonable Study in such a Time, to be meditating much on those two. It is not good that we turn secure, or careless. The Devil is not asleep, but is going about, as a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour, and he wants not Instruments to employ in his Work, nor wants he suitable Baits and Allurements to apply to his Purpose: And therefore we should be making Use of this Antidote against his Poison. The Impress of these two Things upon the Soul, would prove of noble Advantage to People in a reeling Time, and in a Day of Defection: For (1.) Hereby they would be stirred up to use all Means for Establishment in the Truth, that they might be kepted straight in the Day of Temptation, and not trust to their own Strength, the Hazard being so great; but be seeking daily to be strengthned of God with Strength in their Souls; and to be putting on the whole Armour of God, that they may be able to stand, and to withstand. (2.) They would not, in that Day, lean to their own Understandings, far less would they consult Flesh and Blood in the Matter, and see what would promise most ease and quiet to the Flesh: For, would they think, shall I do so, and run such a Risk? (3.) This would make them afraid of the very first Beginnings of Apostasie, or of any Thing that had but the least Tendency thereunto; it would make them stoutly, and resolutely resist the very beginnings of Evil, and be far from making the least Breach in their Consciences, lest the Dam being once a little broke down.

down, the Waters should rush forth with such a Violence, that there should be no stopping of it again.

This would blunt the Points of all the Darts of Temptations taken from the great Things in a World, promised to such as turn with the Times, and depart from Christ, when a Storm cometh on their Face: Alas! what should such think of all these Allurements? What would the Riches, Pleasures, and Delights thereof avail them, when the fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation should enter within the Chambers of their Soul, and drink up their Moisture and Marrow? What could countervail the damage, which could not but be suffered by that inexpressibly and inconceivably greater Punishment, that Apostates shall meet with? (5.) This would also fortifie them against the Menacings, Threatnings, Torments, Imprisonments, Finings, and Deaths from Enemies, for the Truth of Christ: For the Impression of this Truth upon their Htart, that neither Heart can conceive, nor Tongue can express, what shall befall them, who fall in the Hands of a living God, who is a God, to whom Vengeance belongeth and will recompense, would cause them smile at all that Man could do, and laugh at the shaking of his Spear, and little fear the Wrath of Kings, as seing this Invisible God, in whose Hands Apostates will fall: What would all the Deaths in the World seem to them, even the most cruel and merciless Deaths, who had this How-much-sorer-punishment before their Eyes, that such shall be accounted worthy of, as tread under Foot the Son of God? (6.) The Consideration of these Things would cause such, as through one Temptation or other, have been made to turn aside, and to do or say that, which once they had thought never to have said, or done, to make hast out of that Way, wherein they are entered, the End whereof is final and full Apostacie and Death; and stay no longer therein, lest there be no Back turning hereafter;

this,

this, sure, if believed and fixed in the Soul, would cause them consider their Ways, and turn again to the Lord, by speedy Repentance, that they may recover what they have lost. Peter went out quickly, and wept bitterly.

4. We may hence also see, That as the Consideration of the Hainousness of the Sin of Defection, and of the dreadful Wrath and Judgment that awaiteth such as shall apostatize from the Truth, is very suitable to Gospel-times, and very corresponding with a Gospel-frame; so this becometh a Mean, sanctified of the Lord, to preserve his own chosen and sanctified Ones from that full and final Apostasie, that others may fall into, and never recover themselves, and so cause some stand fast in an evil Time, against all Assaults and Temptations. We may not think, That the Gospel hath nothing to do with Threatnings, seing we find such here, and elsewhere. Nor must we think, that these Suppositions and Threatnings upon Supposition, do evince, that such as are truly gracious shall fall away from the Truth, either fully or finally: This is but a corrupt and groundless Inference, overturning both the *Covenant of Redemption*, and the *Covenant of Grace*. But we must look upon these Proposals and Threatnings as Means contributing, through the Blessing of God, to the more firm Establishment of his People, and to keep them from final Defection, and to recover them from a partial falling away, and to render others inexcusable. As a Mean therefore unto this End, should these Things be thought upon with dependence upon the Lord for a Blessing, whose Blessing only maketh Means effectual unto their Ends.

From Verse 32 and forward, the Apostle maketh Use of another Argument to press them to constancy, and stedfastness in the Faith, notwithstanding of all, that they may yet be put to suffer for adhering to the Truth, saying, *But call to Remembrance the former Days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great Fight of Afflictions.* He would have them

them rememb'ring their former Days of suffering : One would think, that this would rather prove a Discouragement, than any Argument stirring them up unto constancy. But the Argument is strong and wisely managed, and every Word hath a Force in it. For, (1.) The former Days are now past, and all that Sorrow and Suffesing is over ; all of it being but a transient and passing Evil ; yesterday's Sorrow, Pain and Grief is gone to Day ; and so is not to be laid in the Ballance with that endless, always abiding, and permanent Sorrow and Pain, and gnashing of Teeth, that abide the wicked : And such as fall away from the Way of Truth. (2.) They are but Days : The Time is short, and soon at an End. Ten Days are far from long evermore : And what can this light and momentany Affliction import, when laid in the Ballance with that hyperbolically Hyperbolick eternal Weight of Glory, 2 Cor. 4. Verse 17. (3.) At that Time, they were illuminated, that is, brought into a State of Light : The Syriack and Ethiopick turn it, In which ye received Baptism, that is, were solemnly initiated, and enrolled among Christ's Scholars and Souldiers. He would have them rememb'ring, how at their first appearing in the Fields for Christ, and engaging in Christianity, they did meet with Trials and Tribulations ; and so found, what they were to lay their Account with, all alongs, that Bonds and Afflictions were to abide them, and that they must take up their Cross daily and follow Christ : And therefore they should not now faint, because of continuing Afflictions ; they being hardened thereunto, at the very Beginning, and finding that there was nothing else to be expected all the Way, they cannot say, they are deceived, or disappointed ; for they could not but know the Experience, upon what Terms they did engage and were to continue : And seeing at their first out-setting they stood, when they were but green Souldiers ; what a shame were

were it for them now to faint and give over. (4.) This Word illuminated faith further, That at that Time, through the Spiritual Light of God, while they were but young Christians, they received such convincing Illumination, concerning the Truth, that they were perswaded thereof, notwithstanding of all the dark Clouds, that Affliction, and Persecution upon the Account thereof, could raise to darken its Glory and Beauty. And shall you now, (would he say,) when the Truth should have become more glorious and amiable, desert it, and turn from it ; and thereby withall declare, that all your former Illumination was but a meer Delusion ? (5.) They had a great Fight of Afflictions before ; they had their Sufferings before, and a whole Battel and Fight of them, yea and a great Fight of them : And what can they fear more now ? (6.) And while they were engaged in that Battel.fight of Suffering, and Afflictions, which was no Mean and common one, but was a great Fight they endured, were not shaken, nor made to recoil : And what a shame were it for them now, when beaten Soldiers, and Christians of a longer standing, to faint and sit up, as if all their Strength were gone, and their Hope fully cut off. Thus we see, how this one Argument is many ; and every one of them should have a distinct Language unto all the faithful Followers of the Lord, not to lose Heart and quit Courage, notwithstanding of all they have suffered, since the very Day they engaged in this Warfare under Christ, the Captain : The Remembrance of their old Sufferings should not faint them, but rather animate them, upon this Account, that he who helped them before can help them yet ; and that they can not say, that when they engaged at first, it was with this reserve, that they should be free of Sufferings, or at least should be but to endure Sufferings and Afflictions only for some short Time, and a few Days, and then when that Storm was over

should

should die in their Nest, in Peace and Quietness!

In the next Place, Verse 33. 34. he explaineth this great Fight of Afflictions, shewing wherein it stood: Whence we may observe on the by, That the Lord taketh special Notice of all the Items, Parts, Ingredients, and Circumstances of the Battels, and Fightings of Afflictions, which his People are put to endure on his Account: As also of their Carriage and Deportment, while under these Wrestlings, and fighting these Battels: And as he knoweth and taketh Notice of these Things; so he will make honourable Mention thereof, to their Commendation and Praise, and make them and others both know, that he hath taken Notice of these Things.

This great Fight of theirs he brancheth forth in two Parts, the one comprehendeth what befel themselves immediately, the other what they suffered through Sympathy with others: As to the First, He saith, Partly, whilst ye were made a gazing Stock both by Reproaches and Afflictions. And again, Verse 34. And took j^{oy}fully the spoiling of your Goods, knowing in your selves, that ye have in Heaven a better, and an enduring Substance. They did meet with Sufferings in their Name, in their Persons, in their Honour, and in their Goods. (1.) In their Name, they were reproached, slandered, upbraided, called Traitors, and Apostates from Moses; and what not? As it is sad and grievous to a noble, and generous Spirit to be loaded with Contumelies, Reproaches, false Accusations, Tauntings, and mockings; so the Child of God must resolve to fight with that Enemie, in his Way to Heaven, and to go thorow evil Report, and thorow Reproaches, Revilings, Slanders, Back-bitings, and false Imputations. We can get no worse Name, than our Master got, who was called a Glutton and a Wine-bibber, yea a Devil and a Samaritan. (2.) They suffered in their Persons; for they did meet with Afflictions:

Missions : The Word in the Original signifieth an oppressing or breaking Stroke, a pressing Evil, such as beating, wounding, imprisoning, chaining, banishment and the like. For the Verb it cometh from, is used to signify the pressing of Grapes in the Wine-press, and that pinching and straiting which a short or strait Shoe causeth. How desirous so ever the Flesh be of ease, and naturally we would shun every Thing that pincheth or paineth us ; yet the Child of God must lay his Account, to meet with no small Trouble, Pain, Torment, Unease, and Pressures to his Body, in following his Duty : Our Lord's Worthies knew not much what ease meanted, when they were tortured, scourged, bound and imprisoned, stoned, sawn asunder, slain with the Sword, wandering about in Sheep-Skins, and Goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, wandering in Deserts and in Mountains, and in Dens, and in Caves of the Earth, Heb. II. 35, 36, 37, 38. (3.) In their Honour they suffered, when as to both the former they were made a gazing-stock. They were not privately backbiten, and slandered, or wounded in their Names ; nor privately beaten and oppressed, but publickly accused, and shamefully handled, brought, as it were, to Scaffolds and Pillories, set upon publick Theaters, and there exposed to all the publick Shame, Ignominy, Afront, Disgrace and Injuries, that Malice could pour out against them, when made open Spectacles, and theatrized, I Cor. 4. 9. How dear so ever our Honour and Respect in a World be to us ; yet that must be denied and forsaken for our Master : And we should account it our Honour to be spoiled of all Honour for his Sake ; when he was publickly defamed and injured, spit upon, openly upbraided and mocked, and publickly hung up upon a Cross, as the worst of Malefactors : Should it trouble us much, if we be used as he was ? Is it not enough for the Servant, that he be as his Master ?

Master? May not the same Lot serve him? (4.) Moreover they suffered in their Goods, for they took joyfully the spoiling of their Goods: They were plundered, pillaged, robbed; and so must quit what they had gained by honest and lawful Means for Livelihood to themselves, to their Families and Posterity. This then is no new Thing, for the faithful Followers of the Lord Jesus to be stripped naked of all their Wealth; to have their Goods eaten up and devoured by Strangers, before their Eyes; to have their States, Rents, Livelihoods taken from them, and they and theirs exposed to want and penury: It is sufficient that Christ hath said, *Mark 10. 29, 30. Verily I say unto you, there is no Man that hath left House — or Lands for my Sake, and the Gospels, but he shall receive an hundredfold, now in this Time, Houses — and Lands, with Persecutions, and in the World to come, eternal Life.* It is said of them here, to their great Commendation, and to our Instruction, that they took this Robbery, and Spoiling of their Goods joyfully, with a cheerful Mind, with rejoicing of Heart, being glad they had Goods, Rents, Houses, Lands, or any Thing they had gained with the sweat of their Brows, to quit and lose for Christ, and his Cause and Testimony. It was no Grief or Sorrow of Heart to them, to be plundered of all; for it was Matter of Joy unto them, and they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer the loss of all Things for the Name of Jesus. And the Ground of this their Joy is added, *Knowing in your selves, that ye have in Heaven a better and more enduring Substance.* They comforted themselves with the Expectation of what was more than upmaking; they knew of some substantial Thing, every Way better as to Qualities, than any Thing they could lose here; and of a more firm, lasting and abiding Nature: It is more enduring, and surely keeped; for it is in Heaven. Believers then, however the World judge,

are

are no Fools; Men think it Folly and Madness, to suffer the Loss of their Lands and Moveables; yet or but to hazard the same, and thus to cast away their Goods, that have cost them so much Labour and Travel in the gathering, and thereby to expose themselves, their Families and Children to Beggerie and Want: But they know no better, they see not what a rich, safe, upmaking and everlasting glory Inheritance they are looking for; and how they dare not hazard the Lose or Missing of that, for all they have in the World. He is no Fool, even in the Eyes of the World, who, to secure an heritable Kingdom or Earldom, will with joy suffer the Loss of a Penny: And he would be accounted a Fool of the first Magnitude, who, by keeping of one Penny, would lose the sure Hope and Expectation of a rich and honourable Inheritance. Hence we may also see, whether plundering and spoiling of Goods should draw our Eye, even upward to view the Length and Breadth, the Height and Depth of the Inheritance above, which is beyond the Reach of Plunderers and Robbers, and which decayeth not, but endureth for ever, and whose Incomes are not yearly, nor quarterly, but hourly and every Minute of endless, timeless, unalterable Eternity. O what Support, Comfort and Joy, would the Sight of this by Faith, bring into the Soul, under all its Losses and Hardships in a World? How would he sing for joy of Heart, when the World is doing what it can to make him howl? How would he feast, while having neither to bite, nor to sup, and when stripped naked of all his Wealth and Riches, on the sure Expectation and to look for the better and more enduring substantial Thing above, whereby he is already in Possession, as it were of it, as the Original may be rendered, knowing that you have in your selves, &c.

The second Part of this Fight of Afflictions, which they endured, was partly whilst they became Companions

Companions of them that were so used: Of which he giveth one Instance, v. 34. For ye had Compassion of me in my Bonds. They interessed themselves, and embarked themselves, and took a Share of the Lot of others of the Followers of Christ, who were made a Gazing-stock by Reproaches and Afflictions: They sympathized with them, being pierced with their Pinchings, as if they had been their own, knowing that they were of the same Body; and therefore, when one Member suffered, they all suffered: They did not disown them, while in Prison or in Bonds, they kepted not at a Distance from them, either as unconcerned in them, or as ashamed of them, or as afraid to suffer with them; but openly and really manifested their brotherly Sympathy, in being bound with them that were bound, in visiting them in their Imprisonments, and in supplying to their Necessities; therefore said the Apostle of them, Chap. 6. 10. *For God is not unrighteous to forget your Work and Labour of Love, which ye have shewed toward his Name, in that ye have ministered to the Saints, and do minister.** Now this Sympathy and fellow-feeling, this compassionating the Case of other Sufferers, when we are free; this owning of Sufferers in their Sufferings, and kindly supplying of their Wants, according to our Power; this taking Part with them, speaking to their Defence, and in the Defence of the Cause, for which they suffer, the Lord looketh upon it as a Part of the great Fight of Afflictions, which we endure. Whatever Men, whom carnal Wisdom teacheth to draw back, and secure themselves and their own Peace and Quiet, judge of such open and avowed owning, sympathizing with, and supplying of such as are suffering for the Name of Jesus; yet the Lord accounteth much of it, and enrolleth such among his valiant Soldiers, and Fighters of his Battles: And how little soever it be, that they can do, by Way of Sympathy with, and Supply of such

such as are Sufferers ; yet, when it is done in Up-rightness, out of Zeal for the Cause, and according to their Power, the Lord looketh upon it as a great Matter, as a Part of their Fight of Afflictions. The Consideration whereof should excite all, who would be ambitious of this Honour, to lay out themselves to the outmost, to testify their Affection and Sympathy with such, as are mocked and afflicted, for the Testimony of Jesus ; and not to be ashamed of them, or their Bands : On the other Hand, we may be assured, that the Lord will put a far other and contrary Construction upon, and give another Judgment of such, as, whether out of Fear, or carnal Wisdom, draw back, and either discountenance and discourage such as are suffering, or do not, and say not, what they can and may, for the strengthening and encouraging of them, but are hiding their Eyes from their own Flesh, not rememb'ring them that are in Bonds, as bound with them, and them which suffer Adversity, as being themselves also in the Body, Heb. 13. 3. but virtually and interpretatively, if not more formally and expressly, are siding with, and approving the Persecuters, and condemning the righteous. O that such would remember that which Christ told us, Mat. 25. verse 41.—46. Then shall he say also unto them on the left Hand, Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels ; for I was an hungred, and ye gave me no Meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no Drink ; I was a Stranger, and ye took me not in ; naked, and ye clothed me not ; sick and in Prison, and ye visited me not. — Verily, I say unto you, in as much as ye did it not unto one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me, &c.

Before the Apostle speak to other Grounds of Encouragement unto a constant adhering unto the Truth, notwithstanding of Sufferings, he mindeth them of the End, and Aim he had before him ; or of the true Tendency of what he was saying ; and

of the Use and Improvement they shuld make of his Discourse, verse 35. *Cast not away therefore your confidence.* This therefore sheweth, that it is an Inference natively flowing from what he had been saying. And the Matter he presseth them unto, is fixed Constancy in owning of the Truth, a standing by Christ, and his despised Truth and Cause; but the Words wherein he expresseth this, are considerable. *Cast not away your Confidence,* alluding to Soldiers, who, in utter Despondency of Heart, and Despair of Outgate, cast away their very Shield and Buckler, wherewith they should defend themselves, that they may be in better Case to fly, and shamefully desert the Fight. He would not have them losing it, (as the Syriack translate the Word) far less casting it away from them, as no more useful or serviceable to them; but would have them holding it fast, and employing it for their Security; for there is a *Meiosis* in the Words. And what is it he would have them thus keeping and using? It is their *Confidence* or *Boldness*, (as the Word signifieth, and is oft rendered (that is, their bold avowing and professing of the Truth of the Gospel, being the same upon the Matter, with what he expresseth elsewhere, in this same Epistle, in other Words, as Chap. 3. 14. For we are made Partakers of Christ, if we hold the Beginning of our Confidence steadfast unto the End, and Chap. 6. 11. And we desire, that every one of you do shew the same Diligence, to the full Assurance of Hope unto the End. And in this same Chap. 10. 23. Let us hold fast the Profession of our Faith, without wavering. And Chap. 12. 1. — Let us run with Patience the Race that is set before us. He would not have them quitting the Cause, upon the Account of any Thing they were to meet with; but he would have them holding that fast, and fixedly standing to the Profession of the Truth, which they had imbraced.

The Inference of this, from what the Apostle had said

said before, confirmeth what we formerly observed and saith to us, That there should be a Counter working of the Designs of Satan, and of his Instruments ; so that what they do of Purpose to drive by hot Persecution, the Professors of Truth from their steadfast adhering to the same, should make them the more fixedly resolute to hold fast their Profession of the Faith. The more hard the Devil's Wind bloweth, to spoil them of their Vail of Profession, they should hold it the faster, as a Man will hold his Cloak the faster about him that the Wind blow hard. And next, That this is the Devil's main Business, in all his Assaults of Persecution, to brangle the Faith of the Gospel, and to bring the Professors thereof to a shameful relinquishing of it, and of the open and avowed Profession thereof, which should cause his People, who would be found faithful to their Master, and would not willingly comply with Satan's wicked Designs, adhere the more constantly and steadfastly to the Truth. *Thirdly*, That the abating of, and falling from any Measure of Perswasion of the Truth of the Gospel, of Zeal for it, and of Confidence about it, which formerly we have had, is gradual and partial Defection therefrom, and Relinquishment thereof ; for instead of saying Stand fast in the Profession of the Truth, he saith, *Cast not away your Confidence*. Lose not, as if he would say, any Measure of Boldness and Confidence in avowing the Truth, which you have had, for all you can meet with. When our Confidence and Boldness for the Truth is not held fast, we have in Part yielded already, and are fair before the Wind of Temptation to yield yet more. An Abatement in this, causeth an Abatement in Courage and Resolution ; and this maketh the Man more weak and unable to resist : Whence it will come to pass, that the same Temptation, that formerly could not prevail, will easily lay him upon his

his Back. And therefore, Fourthly, We should not bink it enough to be keeped in a Day of Temptation and Tribulation, from making full and formal Defection, or from a plain and manifest Departing from the Faith, once received ; but our Endeavour should be, let Satan and his Instruments rage as they will, to be keeped in the same Measure of Perswasion of, and in the same Firedge of Zeal for the Truth and Interest of Christ, without the least Abatement of our Boldness and Confidence in, and about his Matters : For they are still as precious and lovely as ever, and should be as desirable to us ; yea, the more the Devil rage against them, and would have us renouncing them, the more should our Esteem of them, and Affection to them grow and increase ; seing, if they were not excellent, the Devil would not so appear against them ; and if the adhering to the open avowed, and confident Profession of them, and appearing for them, were not much to the Glory of God, and to our own spiritual Advantage, we would not need to fear Satan's Enmity to the one, and Envy of the other, so much as we have just Cause to do.

He subjoineth immediately a strong Inducement unto this Duty of holding fast their Confidence, by adding, *Which hath great Recompense of Reward.* This which we have rendred, Recompense of Reward, is but one Word in the Original, though thus rendered here, and Chap. 2. Verse 2. and 11. 26: and signifieth a Retribution, or a Recompense given by Way of Reward : By which we must not think, that there is any proper Merit in any Thing we do, or that what God hath promised to such as endure to the End, is properly a Recompense, or a Reward ; for when we have done all we ought or can, we are but unprofitable Servants ; but all is of free Grace, and all purchased by Christ to his own : As the Duty is performed in the Strength of Christ, so the Good promised

promised to the Performers of the Duty, is purchased by, and had through Christ, and so the Reward is but a Reward of free Grace, and no Debt ; and the Word rather pointeth forth the Certainty of the Connexion betwixt the Duty and the Blessing to be such as is betwixt Work and Wages with upright Men, than any proper Worth or Merit in the Duty : Whence we may see, 1. That it is suitable to Gospel-obedience to be moved therunto with the Consideration of the rich, and upmaking Reward of Grace, that is at the Back of it. Moses did so in the next Chap. Verse 26. and Christ himself did so, Chap. 12. Verse 2. 2. In trying Times, and in Days of Difficulty, it is most seasonable, fit and useful for such as would be keept honest, to be presenting before themselves, and taking a full and frequent View of what free Grace that provided for them, at the End of the Race ; that hereby Satan's fair Offers may appear to be nothing ; they may see, how all their Losses will easily be made up, and the Sight of the Recompense that is coming may inflame their Desires after it ; and this may lessen all Difficulties in the Way, and cause their Strength, Courage and Resolution grow ; and so they may be in better Case to wrestle thorow all Opposition, and to stand fast to the End. 3. The Recompense of Reward that awaiteth such as stand fast in the Faith, persevere to the End, keep fast their Confidence, and their Assurance of Hope to the End, is no mean Reward, it is called a great Recompense of Reward ; and how great it is, who can tell ? The Apostle could not get Expressions to make us understand it, nay, nor Hyperboles ; and therefore he must tell us, It is an eternal Weight of Glory above all Hyperboles ; so that one Hyperbole upon the Top of another will not serve to hold it forth sufficiently : And we see what Variety of Expressions and Metaphors Christ useth in his Epistles to Asia, Rev. 2. and 3. to cause us understand something of it. And shall it not be a great Reward,

Reward, when it shall be no less than the Rewarder himself? O if there were more of the lively Hope and Faith of this this Day! 4. The losing Sight of the rich and great Recompence of Reward, will contribute very much to a Man's Fainting in the Day of Adversity, and prove a great Hinderance to his holding fast his Confidence, and bold Profession of the Truth. If it were not so, the Spirit of the Lord would not thus propose it, as an Encouragement, not to cast away our Confidence. 5. Though it might be a rich enough Reward for us, to get that Honour put upon us, to avow him, and his Truth and Name, cost it us what it woudl, yet, as the Lord will not have any run his Errands upon their own Charges; so neither will he have them serving him for nothing; but how feckle's and inconsiderable soever the greatest and most hazardous of their Service be in it self, yet he will look upon himself, as engaged to reward the same, of free Grace; not indeed with a Recompence corresponding to its Worth, but with a Recompence suiting his greatness: Therefore he hath appointed a great Recompence of Reward for such as keep their Confidence, and are stedfast in their bold and resolute avowing of him, in the midst of fiery Trials.

He tells them moreover, Verse 36. That they had need of Patience, that after they had done the Will of God they might receive the Promise. And this pointeth forth another Encouragement, to the holding fast of their Confidence and Profession; and withall obviateth an Objection; for they might say, How long shall we hold fast our Confidence? shall our life be a constant Life of Suffering and Wrestling? shall we wait so long, so many Years for the Recompence of Reward? He answereth, and withall driveth on his Purpose of pressing them to Constancy and Stedfastness, by saying, You have need of Patience: Patience is a necessary Grace, and very useful; and if your Trials did not continue, you would have

little or no Use of it, or Occasion for it; and the spiritual Exercise of this Grace is of great Use to make you stand fast, and hold your Profession firm, and your standing fast, and not casting away your Confidence, is a good Mean also to the Exercise of Patience; and therefore he annexeth this to the preceding Verse, with a *for*; so that these two work sweetly together unto others Hands: And withall, having spoken of the great Recompence of Reward, that did certainly await such, as did not cast away their Confidence; he tells them, that in Reference to the getting Possession of that, they have need of Patience; the Master is lying yet wrapt up in a Promise, and they must go on in doing the commanded Will of the Lord, and that is, to stand to the Truth and the Profession thereof, and then receive the promised great Recompence of Reward at the End, in God's good Time. Whence we see, 1. That as Patience in its Exercise, in Times of Trial, is an adorning Grace, much commanding and setting forth the Lustre and Beauty of Christians; so is it of great Use and Profit, and a great Help to Perseverance and Stedfastness in the Truth: *Tribulation worketh Patience*; and because of that, the Children of God should *glory in Tribulation*, Rom: 5. 3. The trying of our Faith worketh Patience, and Patience must have its perfect Work, otherwise we cannot be perfect and intire, wanting nothing, Jam: 1. 3, 4. An impatient Man will soon weary of the Cross. 2. Beside all the hundred-fold, that is had in this Life, with Persecution, according to Christ's faithful Promise; and all that Consolation that aboundeth, as the Sufferings of Christ abound by Christ, 2 Cor. 1. 5. there is incomprehensibly more yet reserved for such, as abide faithful unto the End; and it is laid up in a sure Promise, and reserved for them, under the Lock and Key of the Unchangableness and Faithfulness of God. The Lord thinketh it best, not to give his valiant Soldiers all their Pay in Hand, but

so much only, as may serve their Necessities, while fighting the Battles of the Lord, and may keep them from fainting, and sitting up through Discouragements and Fears. 2. The Faith of this great Recompence of Reward will contribute much to the Christian and constant Exercise of Patience: And such as would not miss that Recompence in End, must now resolve upon the Exercise of Patience; for God hath laid up the inconceivably great Reward in a Promise, that their Faith and Patience may in the mean Time be exercised; therefore there must be no wearying of the Cross, nor fainting under the Trial; but the Believer must look to the Promise, and in Patience possess his Soul, while the appointed Time come, that the promised Crown shall be put upon his Head, and he put in Possession of that Inheritance, that is incorruptible; and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, and is reserved in the Heavens for him, 1 Pet. 1. 4. 3. Patient suffering and enduring of a fight of Afflictions for Christ and his Interest, and for avowing of his Truth, and standing to the open Profession thereof, in the midst of Persecution, is a Doing of the Will of God, and a noble Act of royal Obedience unto their Lord and King, and a Piece of their Work of Homage, and Loyalty to their Sovereign. He is then calling them to it, and laying Commands upon them for that End; and therefore, Impatience, and through Impatience a wearying of the Cross, and a fainting under it, and a passing from the open avowing of Christ and his Truth, through Fear, or Love to Ease and Quietness, is a great Act of Disloyalty and Disobedience to him, who is King of kings and Lord of lords. 4. At the Lord will not have the Service of his Servants unrewarded; so this firm Connexion is not made betwixt the Reward of Grace, and begun Service; but betwixt the Recompence of Reward, and the doing of the Will of God with Patience, which is the same with that else where, *He who endureth to the End, the same shall*

shall be saved, Mat. 10. 22. Therefore saith James; Chap. 1. 12. Blessed is the Man that endureth Temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the Crown of Life, which the Lord hath promised to those that love him.

Having told them of a Necessity for them to exercise Patience, that hereby they might go on in doing the Will of God, and so in End receive the Promise, that is, the good Thing promised, he addeth, Verse 37. as a Ground for their Patience, and as an Encouragement to it, these Words, *For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.* If we look on these Words, as relating to the then present State of these Jews, and to what they were shortly to meet with, they point forth the great Catastrophe, that was to come upon the whole Jewish Polity, Worship and State, according to what was, at several Occasions, foretold by our Lord, and threatened to befall them. Their State and Land was to be ruined and laid waste, their Church and Polity was to be overthrown, their Temple destroyed, and all their Levitical Administrations taken away; which also very quickly thereafter came to pass. But we may look further in it, and observe what that good was, which was to be brought along with, and effectually brought about, by this terrible coming of the Lord in Wrath and Judgment; and this was the full and sole Establishment of the Gospel Administration, which many of the Jews were bitter Enemies against, and oppugning and persecuting by all Means, and which others had begun to receive and profess, and now were departing from, and forsaking either in Part, by mixing therewith the Jewish Observations; or wholly, by following only their old Way of Worship, and which others were more seriously owning whom here he is exhorting and pressing unto steadfastness in that Way; as also, the Lord's appearing for them, to rid them out of Thraldom, in his good Time, and his delivering of them finally out of all their Troubles, Temptations, Trials and Vexations;

tions, which they must lay their Account to meet with, so long as they are here in a World. He seemeth in this, and in the following Verse, to have his Eye upon these Words of the Prophet *Habbakuk*, Chap. 2. 3. 4. *For the Vision is yet for an appointed Time; but at the End it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry;* Behold the Soul, which is lifted up, is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his Faith; yet he citeth them not Word for Word, but useth his own Liberty, neither following the Hebrew Text, nor the *yo Version*, nor yet the *Chaldee Paraphrase*, (which were the only Versions then in Use among the Jews at that Time, in all Things, satisfying himself with pointing at the likeness of the Case, now intimate by him, and that signified by the Prophet, that the Ground of pressing the same Duties, and the Carriage of the Jews now, which the Prophet's Words did hold forth then, might be manifest, and the more unquestionable; and all this for enforcing of the main Point he is driving at here.

We shall not any further prosecute this Matter, nor insist upon the Explication of the Case spoken to in *Habbakuk*, or of the Words used there, but shortly follow forth the Thred of the Apostles Discourse here, which, as was hinted before, is to encourage them to Constancy, notwithstanding that they were yet to exercise their Patience, and to wait for the Accomplishment of the Promise. Now, because Unbelief might prompt them to think, that it is long to the Time, when the good Things promised shall be actually bestowed, and that they might be made to wait long for the Accomplishment of the Promise, and not be the better; and so begin to faint in their Minds, and yield to Temptations, promising some seeming Advantage in Hand; therefore he subjoineth these Words to prevent this Mistake, and to remove this Ground of Fainting, telling them, That the Promiser with the Promise, or the good

Thing promised in his Hand, was not so far away, as they might possibly think, yet a little while, (the Time is not long, it is a very short Time) the Words in the Original are most emphatick, to denote the Inconsiderableness, and Brevity of the Time, it is a little Time, a very little Time, (as the Syriack hath it) presently after a very little Time, (as the Arabick hath it) And he that will come, shall come, and will not tarry. (He, whom ye are called to look for, and expect as coming with his Reward with him, will come, and is upon his March already, and he will not stay) therefore would he say, Have a little Patience, weary not, stand fast and look for him, he will be upon the Enemies with Judgment, and on his People with Mercy, ere we be aware. Hence we may see, 1. That such is the Weakness of the People of God, and so little is their Faith, that God's delay-
ing to come with the expected Mercy and Outgate, is enough to faint their Hearts: Howbeit, he re-
maineth faithful and true, and never faileth to come
in the appointed and fit Season: And howbeit they
dare not but say, that it is true, Every Day is as a
Year to them. 2. This proceedeth from want of
the due Measure, or the due Exercise of the Grace
of Patience: You have need of Patience, for yet a little
while, and he will come. 3. Though the Lord cometh
always in due Time with Judgments to his En-
emies, and with Mercies and Deliveries to his People,
and doth not circumduce his Day, nor fail in his
Purposes or Promises; yet he will not always come,
just at that Minute of Time, that his People think
he will come. He hath yet a little while; he must
measure his own Times, and appoint his own Seasons;
and we must not think to cause him make haste, sooner
than he hath determined, though we may cry to
him, To haste, thereby expressing our deep Sense of
the Danger, our earnest Desire to have him appear-
ing, our Fear that we shall not hold out very long,
but faint if he help not, and our Faith and Hope
that

that he will come. And he thinks good, his People should be kepted waiting in Patience, and be taught Submission to him, who doth all Things well, and can time his own Mercies and Deliveries best; and therefore the Time is sometimes longer, sometimes shorter, wherein they are called to this Exercise of Patience and waiting. 4. Be the Time of the Lord's delaying to come never so long in our Eyes, yet Patience should be kepted in Exercise, and have its perfect Work; and we should not weary, nor faint, as if either God had forgotten to be gracious, or had changed his Purpose, or were either unwilling or unable to perform his Promise. 5. Whatever Temptation, and our Unbelieving Hearts say, the faithful and righteous God and Saviour will come precisely in his appointed Season; and not one Minute of Time longer will he tarry, *He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.*

Now follow the Words of the Text. *Now the just shall live by Faith.* In the Original it is, *But the just shall live by Faith.* The Syriack readeth it, *But the just shall live by the Faith of me,* following the Translation of the 70, of these Words, *Habbuk. 2: 4.* the vulgar Lat. readeth it, *my just* (as do some Copies of the 70) *liveth by Faith.* The Arabick. *And the just liveth by Faith.* The Ethiopick, *But the just liveth by Faith.* In the Original, *Habbak. 2. 4.* it is, *And the just shall live by (or in) his Faith,* which the Arabick turneth very strangely, *And my Righteousness liveth by Faith.*, but the Syriack better, *The just shall live by Faith;* yet leaving out the affix Pronoun. Though that Word now, be not in the Original, yet the whole Context, and the Dependence of this Verse upon the former, doth clearly import as much, as this Word cometh to; for the Apostle having told them before, that they had need of Patience; and therefore should not cast away their Confidence, for yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry: And in this mean while, till he come, who will not tarry;

tarry ; and until this little while be over, the just Man, who is now justified by Faith in Christ, shall win to a Life, and that through Faith. And it may also signify, that during that Time, the just Man's Work and Duty is, and will be, to live by Faith. Now both these may be comprehended here, the one being subordinate to the other, and both keeping a just Correspondence with the Context and Scope ; as if he had said, Notwithstanding of Difficulties and Temptations you may meet with, through the Lord's short Delay to come, yet you should not cast away your Confidence, but the rather keep that fast; for as you have need of Patience, so you have need of Faith ; and this is a fit Season for Faith to be exercised in, and for the Believer, or just Man, to be living by Faith ; and hereby such are beyond the Hazard of perishing ; for they shall have a Life, even in that *Interim*.

The *just* here, is the Man who hath fled to Christ, and hath imbraced him according to the Gospel, and that in Truth and Uprightness ; and being covered with the Righteousness of Christ, is accepted of the Lord, as a righteous Person, and is opposed to one, who having not sincerely engaged with Christ, but only by an outward Profession, doth, at length, when the scorching Sun of Persecution ariseth, draw back, (as the following Words intimate) and to one, whose Soul is not upright, but is elevated and lifted up through Pride and Arrogance, as the Words in *Habbakuk* import.

Shall live, that is, he shall be kept in the State of Life, and shall not finally or fully fall away, as such do, who draw back unto Perdition, but shall have a Life of Strength, Support, Comfort, and what else may serve to keep their Head above Water, while swimming through the Sea of manifold Difficulties and Temptations, and carry them thorow, when others, whose Heart hath not been upright with the Lord, shall perish by the Way.

By Faith, or by his Faith, (for though the Apostle doth not express the Pronoun affix, yet it may be easily understood,) that is, by his constant acting of Faith upon the due Objects thereof, answering every Exigent, and Difficulty he may be into, while the little while is not yet at an End, feeding upon the Promise, and sucking Life and Support out of that ; and especially by holding fast, and living upon Jesus Christ, who is the Sum and Extract of all the Promises, in whom they are all centered, and are *yea and amen*, 2 Cor. 1. Verse 20.

Now this being the Meaning of the Words, the Scope sheweth, as we did hint before, that this is said, (which also the following Words, But if any Man draw back, &c. evince) to point forth what should be their Duty and Exercise, while he, who shall come is not yet come, even to live by Faith, and what should be their Advantage thereby, they should have a Life of it, and should certainly be carried through by that Mean ; and therefore there being such a sure and safe Way of thorow-bearing, and of arriving at the Port of Life, notwithstanding of the Lord's not yet coming, as they would expect, they should hold fast their Confidence, and not faint ; for the Time is but short, and he will come ; and until he come, they should exerce their Patience and Faith ; and this will keep them straight, to the saving of the Soul, as it is, Verse 29.

The Words thus explained, and their Interest in the Context, together with their Relation to the Scope manifested, they point forth these four Things to be spoken unto.

1. The proper Time and Season for the Exercise of Faith, which is here called for, imported in the Subjoining of this, to what he said of their Case before.

2. The Advantage that is to be expected hereby, intimated in the Word, *live* ; they shall live by Faith.

3. The Persons who may expect this Advantage of Life, the just, the just shall live by Faith.

4. The Mean whereby this Advantage is to be had and expected, by the just, in such a Time, that is Faith: *The just shall live by Faith.*

CHAP. II.

The Case here explained, and the proper Season of Faith cleared up.

WE come now to speak to the first of these forementioned Particulars, pointed forth in this Passage of Scripture, and which our Translators have more expressly indicated, by translating the Particle, which usually signifieth *but now*; and as we said, though this were not the whole Series of the Apostles Discourse, and his connecting this Verse with what went before by a Particle, doth sufficiently lay down this Ground of Enquiry after the Case, wherein they were, and after the Season, wherein this Duty is called for.

In the brief Explication of the several foregoing Verses which we gave, something of their Case and Condition may be seen, and the Season here pointed at understood; and therefore we need not multiply Words to that End, only we shall give a short View thereof, so far as this Chapter will give us Ground from Verse 23. and forward, resuming briefly what was formerly said, that the Case may be plain.

Therefore, 1. We find Verse 23. by the Apostles Exhortation

Exhortation, saying, *Let us hold fast the Profession of our Faith, without wavering.* This hinted, that such were the Times then, that there was no small Hazard of falling from the Profession of the Truth, and of the Faith of the Gospel, which they had received, and of wavering therein, partly through Trouble upon the one Hand, and other occasioned by a steadfast and zealous Profession, and avowing of the same; partly through the fainting and falling away of others. They had imbraced the Gospel; and so had either wholly, or in Part, at least laid aside the Observation of the legal Institutions, which were but Shadows pointing forth, and leading to the Substance, the true *Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth*, who then was come; and because of this, they were exposed to many Trials and Temptations, some mocking them, as Apostates from *Moses*; and upon that Account raising Trouble against them, others falling off, and departing from the Truth. These Things and the like were ready to cause a Cool in the Profession of many; so that they either fell, or were in Hazard to fall from their open Profession, and avowed owning of Gospel-truth.

2. Next, We find one Particular, as to the Manner of this Profession, pitched upon Verse 25. *Not forsaking of the assembling of our selves together, as the Manner of some is.* They had their publick Assemblies for worshipping of the Lord after the Gospel Manner; and hereby they made open Profession of their owning of Christ and the Gospel; and hereby they exposed themselves unto several Trials and Troubles; these Assemblies being possibly called and accounted unlawful Conventicles, condemned, maligned and opposed by the wicked *Jews*, and by the *Romans* also, in Compliance with the *Jews*; so that they could not enjoy them in Peace and Quietness: And withall, there were some, partly out of Fear, and to shun the Trouble and Disquiet, that they saw attending these Meetings, whether in private Houses, or in the open Fields, or in secret Corners and Dens; partly being deceived

The proper Season

Deceived by false Teachers, who were perverting the right Ways of the Lord, and partly induced by the evil Example of others, who did renounce the Gospel, or did not zealously and steadfastly own it, but followed a prudential Way (as they thought) of pleasing all Parties, and creating no Trouble to themselves, that did turn their Back upon these Assemblies, and forsake them. This was the Manner of some ; and this could not but prove sad and grievous unto the rest, to see themselves thus deserted, and the publick Assemblies forsaken, the Enemies thereby gratified, Christ Jesus dishonoured, their own Hands weakened, and many thereby scandalized and much disengaged, and others tempted to depart likewise from the Truth ; and thus a Way laid to the total renouncing of the whole Profession of the Gospel. Upon which Accounts, it could not but be a very sad and an afflicting Time, being a Time both of much apparent Trouble, and of multiplied Temptations.

3. By the Apostles Exhortations here, Verse 24, 25. we may observe another Evil, that hath had too great prevalency and swey in those Days : And that was want of mutual Christian Freedom, in speaking to one another, and stirring up one another to the Duties of the Day. Let us consider, saith he, one another to provoke unto Love and unto good Works : And again, Exhorting one another. He would have them considering one another, taking strict Notice of the Way and Walk of one another, that they may bring on a Paroxism of Love and Beneficence, that they may mutually warm one another unto a more than ordinary heat of Love, and ardency of Christian Affection and Zeal for Christ, and the Profession of his Truth ; and so admonish one another to mind the Duties of the Day, and the Work they are in a special Manner now called to. Whence it may be inferred, that this mutual upstirring unto the zealous avowing of the Truth, was much neglected ; many growing indifferent

ndiffernt and luke-warm, and so satisfying them selves, with a superficial and slender owning of the Truth; and instead of exciting and encouraging others unto Zeal, and zealous appearing for the Truth of the Gospel, rather perswading them to a Remissness, under the Notion and Nickname of a Way of wise Prudence and Sobriety. This must be a dreaful Evil, when Lukewarmness prevaleth among Professours, and they not only are not rubbing one another, until they come to an high Measure of Love to God and Man, even to a Paroxism of Love and of good Works; but are rather cooling one another, and blunting the Edge of one another, and teaching one another by Word and Example to be remiss, to lay aside their Zeal, to walk after the Rule of carnal Prudence, to seek to please all, and to save their Skin.

4. And this was the more sad, that many did thus carry, though they saw the Day was approaching; that is, the Day of the Lord's coming to plead his Controversie, with the whole State of the Jews; the Day that was foretold them, wherein their Temple, and all their Temple Worship should be overthrown and destroyed, and the Gospel-dispensation established: For he would have them thus provoking one another to Paroxisms of Love and good Works, to Zeal for Christ and his Cause, to a constant owning and frequenting of the despised and hated, and opposed Assemblies of Christians; to worship the Lord, according to the Gospel; and to serious exhorting one another unto these Duties, upon this Ground and Motive, *and so much the more, that ye see the Day approaching.* The plain Forerunners, and manifest Tokens of this approaching Day, were obvious to them, they saw the Day was approaching, and the Sight thereof should have kindled more Zeal in them for Christ, and have weaned them more from the Jewish Ceremonies, and have cooled their Paroxism of Heat and Zeal for them; and yet, it would appear, too many were never more

zealous

zealous and bent for them, than they were then, when they could not but see, the Day of overturning was at Hand, wherein God would judge his Enemies, and be avenged upon them, and rid his own People out of their Trials and Tribulations.

5. If we look forward to *Verse 32.* we shall find that their present trouble was no new Thing, they had been used with the Cross from the very Beginning of their embracing Christianity; and that they did at the first setting forth, meet with a great Storm, and had a great Fight and Battel of Afflictions; which he afterward, *Verse 33. 34.* more fully brancheth forth and explaineth. It was then a Time, wherein they had nothing to look for, but Afflictions upon Afflictions, and a constant continuing Life of Afflictions: and particularly, as they had been reproached and flattered, robbed of their Honour and Esteem, made gazing Stocks, exposed to open Shame, and Ignominy, and had their Bodies injured, and their Health endangered, and also their Goods and Riches taken from them, and they exposed to Penury, and Want; so they could not but expect the continuance of such a Life, and that still their Names, their Honours and Reputation, their Bodies and their Goods should be preyed upon, and they put to suffer in all these Concernments in owning of the Truth and the Testimony of Jesus: And beside all this, which did, and would yet further befall themselves; there was the Sufferings of their Brethren, which could not but affect and afflict them, and put them to Straits, and possibly to Danger too, in laying out themselves according to their Power, in Way of Sympathy and Compassion, for the supply of the Necessities of such, as were, for the same Cause, put to suffer in their Names, Bodies and Goods, and for the owning of them and their Cause, and contributing what they could for their Support and Comfort.

6. Upon the Account of this continuing bitter Life of multiplied Afflictions and Distresses, sever-

, its like, did fall off, grow faint and weary, having no more Patience ; and others were in hazard to follow their Example ; and instead of drawing an encouragement from their former hard Sufferings, and their Deportment under them, they were ready to reflect upon them with a far other Intent, to wit, to infer therefrom, that it was their best to relinquish that Way, whereby they were exposed to continual Sufferings of all Sorts ; and that it was but folly to think, they should be able to ride out all those Storms, that they could not but foresee, which might have been the Occasion of that Exhortation, *Verse 35. Cast not away therefore your Confidence, and again, Verse 36. For ye have need of Patience; &c.*

7. The great Reward, which they were looking for, and the Hope and Expectation whereof did encourage them to embrace the Truth, and to continue hitherto, in the Profession of it, was but yet to come, and was at present wrapped up in a Promise ; they were not possessed of it, but called to live by Hope, and to comfort themselves in the Expectation of it : Therefore the Apostle told them, *Verse 34. that they had a better and enduring Substance in Heaven :* And so could not enjoy that Substance, or substantial Good, so long as they were here : And though the holding fast of their Confidence had a great Re-compence of Reward, *Verse 35.* yet it was at present lying in a Promise, and they were not to expect it, till after they had done the will of God, *Verse 36.*

8. The Delivery which they were looking for, and the Outgate of these present Calamities and Temptations, with which they were wrestling, which they were put in Expectation of, was yet delayed, though he who was to come, would certainly come, and would not tarry, beyond the due Time ; yet they behooved to have a little Patience, for yet a very little while, he would come, and make haste.

In short then, the Time of Season here pointed to, wherein the just would and was to live by Faith, was

was a Time of sore and lasting Trouble, Distress, Persecution and Loss, for the Truth of the Gospel, and for abiding in the open Profession, and Declaration thereof, by keeping their meetings for the worshipping of God in Jesus Christ, together with other Trials and Temptations from the Sight of the Faintings, and Defections of many Professours, and the Fears of the falling away of others. And all this accompanied with a delayed Delivery and Outgate? The Time then is a Time, wherein *Hope* and *Patience* must be at Work; then must *Faith* also be at Work; for without the Exercise of Faith, the exercise of the other cannot continue, yea nor be at all; if Faith sink, neither Hope nor Patience can swim. However, it is obvious, what a Time that is, wherein *Hope* and *Patience* are called for, to wit, a Time of the Lord's delaying (as we may so speak) to give the Outgate and Reward in Hand, that is promised and to be looked for; and that accompanied with Distress, Trouble and Temptations.

Whence we see, That the People of God may be thus exercised, that is, have a sad and great Fight of Afflictions, Trouble, Persecution, Reproach, Disrespect, open Affronts, Losses, Plunderings, Robbings, Temptations, Fears, Stumbling-blocks in the following of their Duty, and in abiding by the open Profession of the Gospel of Christ, and by the Assemblies of the Saints for the Worship of God in Christ; and be looking out for and expecting an Outgate, and yet not obtain for a Time that which they look for, but be made to wait in Hope, and to exercise their Patience, and Faith.

This Truth needeth no particular Confirmation, seeing the Experience of the Church of God in all Ages from the Beginning, sufficiently recorded in the Scriptures of God, doth undeniably evince the same; not to mention the several Instances of particular Believers, as to their own particular Cases of suffering, and expected ourgates, attested also, and revealed

revealed to us by the Scriptures. That one Instance of the People of God in Egypt, may serve for many : What Afflictions and Oppressions they were under, for many Years, the Scripture declarereth ; and little Appearance saw they of any Delivery, till Moses and Aaron came among them, and told them what was their errand from the Lord ; the hearing of which was very refreshful, and made them bow their Heads and worship, Exod. 4. 29, 30, 31. But yet they were to wait a little while, the Delivery was not yet to be ; yea upon Moses and Aaron their delivering their Message unto Pharaoh, their Bondage increased, and all their Hopes evanished, and their Delivery was further out of sight, than it had been before : For such was their Anguish and Distress. that the Officers of the Children of Israel went to meet Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, The Lord look upon you and judge, because you have made our Saviour to be abhorred in the Eyes of Pharaoh, and in the Eyes of his Servant, to put a Sword in their Hand to slay us, Exod. 5. 21. And Moses himself returned unto the Lord, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil intreated this People ? Why is it that thou hast sent me ? For since I come to Pharaoh to speak in thy Name, he hath done evil to this People, neither hast thou delivered thy People at all, Verse 22, 23. And when again the Lord sent Moses to the Children of Israel, and renewed the Promise of their Delivery, and of being put in Possession of the promised Land of Canaan, according to the Promise and Oath made unto Abram. It is said, Exod. 6. 9. They hearkened not unto Moses, for anguish of Spirit, and for cruel Bondage : so little Hope had they, or Faith either of the Accomplishment of the Promise : But after the little while was over, and the few Days, wherein they were called to Faith, Patience and Hope, they were wonderfully brought out of that House of Bondage. And when Pharaoh and his Host pursued after them, and they saw no Way of escaping of his murthering Fury, having the sea before them, and Mountains on every Hand, how

how quickly did their Hopes evanish? And where was then the Accomplishment of the Promise? When again, that Difficulty was overcome, and several others, and they were brought unto the very Borders of Canaan, and could not but expect Possession within few Days; then the Accomplishment seemed hard at Hand; yet how quickly were they put again to the long Sands, (as we say,) when they, because of their murmuring, were put to wander in the Wilderness forty Years in End, ere they could cross the Border of Canaan: And all these Thousands, that came out of Egypt, were made to leave their Carcasses in the Wilderness, and not a Man of them, (save Joshua and Caleb) no not Moses himself, notwithstanding of his earnest Desire, entered into the promised Land.

From which Instance, we may take Notice of these Particulars, as to this delay of bringing about the promised Mercy and Outgate.

1. The Promise may be lay long under Ground, and many Years may pass, ere there be the least Appearance of fulfilling of the Promise: The Lord did promise to Abraham, that his Seed should inherit Canaan, and yet four hundred and thirty Years passed over, before they were brought out of Egypt, Exod. 12. 41 according to what was said, Gen. 15. 13, 14.

2. When the Time of the promised Outgate and Delivery is even at Hand, there may be little or no Appearance, or humane Probability, of any such Thing. Before Moses and Aaron were sent unto the Children of Israel to tell them, That the Lord had heard the Cry of their Oppression and Bondage, and was coming to deliver them, nothing appeared, that did say unto them, That their Delivery was at Hand; and there is little Ground to think, that they had the Faith of that Promise made of old unto Abraham, in exercise.

3. Yes, even when the Time of accomplishing the Promise is at Hand, not only may there be no Appearance

earance or likelihood of the same; but Dispensations may be seeming to cross and contradict the very promise; as if the Lord had forgotten his Promise or had changed his purpose; was it not thus with the Children of Israel, when they were under such Bondage and Oppression, and when a Way was laid that should certainly tend to their utter Ruin; for with their own Hands they were made to destroy all their male Children, which had a direct Tendency unto their Extirpation.

4. There may be great and well grounded Hopes of a quick and speedy Delivery; and yet before the Delivery begin, Matters may be brought unto a more desperate-like pass, and thereby all Hopes evanish; as when after the People of Israel were assured, that the Lord had heard their Cries, and was about to deliver them, their Bondage grew greater than ever, and they were made to wish, that *Moses* and *Aaron* had never come among them.

5. The Lord may be about to begin a Delivery promised, and put his People in the Expectation thereof, and give them sure and unquestionable Grounds to believe it; and yet for a considerable Time keep them tossed betwixt Hope and Fears; as the People of Israel were, when *Pharaoh* seemed sometimes to be inclined to let them go, and immediately his Heart was hardened, that he would not let them go, and upon a new stroke, he seemed again willing, and presently when the Judgment was over, he returned to his former unwillingness and peremptory refusal.

6. The Lord may come with a Delivery at the precise Time appointed, and give a very fair and promising Beginning, and yet hid his Way of carrying on the begun Delivery unto Perfection, and order Matters so in his holy and wise Dispensations, as that the fulfilling of the Promise shall be more improbable than ever: The People went out of Egypt, even all the Hosts of the Lord, and they were delivered

livered from under the Hand of that Tyrant with a strong Hand, and with an out-stretched Arm ; yet how quickly did their Case seem desperate, when *Pharaoh* with all his Horses, and Chariots, Horsemen and Army, pursued after them, while encamping by the Sea ; and they cried out, and said unto *Moses*, Exod. 14. 11, 12. Because there were no Graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the Wilderness ? &c.

7. The Lord may in a signal and remarkable Manner begin a Delivery, and yet see it fit and expedient not to take the nearest Way to perfect the begun Delivery : When the Lord had caused *Pharaoh* yield unto the Peoples departure, and they were delivered from under his Hand, in order to their going to possess the promised Land of *Canaan*, there was a near Way betwixt *Egypt* and *Canaan*, through the Land of the *Philistines*, by which they might have arrived at the Land of *Canaan* within a few Days ; yet (it is said, Exod. 13. 17, 18.) God led them not thorow the Way of the Land of the *Philistines*, although that was near ; — but God led the People about, thorow the Way of the Wilderness of the Red-sea.

8. When a Delivery is begun, many stops may be put unto its accomplishment, and many Years may interveen betwixt the beginning and finishing of the Delivery : The Children of *Israel* were made to wander in the Wilderness full fourty Years, and all these Years interveened betwixt their coming out of *Egypt*, and beginning to get Possession of the promised Land of *Canaan*.

9. A Delivery may seem to be at the very Point of a full Accomplishment ; and yet emergents may fall in, that may cause a delay for many Years : As when the *Israelites* were brought so near to *Canaan*, that they sent the Spies to search out the Land, and were in fair Hopes to have entered therein shortly ; but yet they murmuring, because of the false and discouraging Report of the most Part of the Spies that were sent, provoked the Lord to bring them back

ck again unto the waste howling Wilderness.

10. Many may see the dawning of the Day of a Delivery, that shall never come to see the Meridian, and the Perfection of that begun Mercy : Thousands came forth of Egypt, who left their Carcasses in the Wilderness, and never saw the Land of Canaan.

11. Some may be eminently useful in the Beginning of a Delivery, and eminently honoured and signally owned of the Lord in the dawning of a Day of Delivery, who may be laid by before the Cape-stone be put on ; and notwithstanding of their earnest Importunity to see the Work crowned, may not obtain their Desire, as we see in Moses and Aaron, two most Instrumental, and signally owned of the Lord, in the bringing of the People out of Egypt, who yet got not the honour to tread in the Land of Promise : And though Moses, that eminently Faithful servant of God, besought the Lord, and said, (Deut. 3. 3, 24, 25.) O Lerd God, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness and thy mighty Hand; — I pray thee let me go over and see the good Land, that is beyond Jordan, that goodly Mountain and Lebanon. Yet it is said, Verse 26. 27. That the Lord was wroth with him for their sakes and would not bear him ; and said unto him, Let it suffice thee, speak no more unto me of this Matter. Get thee up to the top of Pisgah, — and behold it with thine Eyes : for thou shalt not go over this Jordan.

12. After many wonderful Appearances of the Word, in carrying on the great Work of Delivery and Mercy, promised and begun ; and all Things taken out of the Way of the full Accomplishment that was long expected ; yet his People may be called to a fighting Life, and not enjoy the accomplished Delivery, without much wrestling Fears and Fightings : When the People of Israel were brought over Jordan, in a wonderful Manner, after the defeat and overthrow of Og and Sihon, and the peaceable Possession of their Country, they were to engage in new knarlick Disputes, and dispute, as it were, every foot of

of the Ground, and to fight with all those Cananites and Inhabitants of the Land, full six Years in End before they could come to the peaceable Possession of the same.

Thus we see, what Way the Lord thinketh good to exercise his People. And such dealing often is procured by the Sins of his People, according to that, *Jerem. 5. 25. Your Iniquities have turned away these Things, and your Sins have withholden good Things from you.* And that, *Isa. 59. 1, 2. Behold the Lord's Hand is not shortened that he cannot save; neither is his Ear heavy that he cannoſt hear: But your Iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your Sins have hid his Face from you, that he will not bear:* And as we see frequently, in the forementioned Instance. See in special, *Num. 14. Verſe 27. — 36. And this one Consideration should stop our Mouth, and put us from any further Enquiry, after the Reasons of the Lord's following such a way.*

Yet, howbeit it should satisfie us, and be an Answer unto all our Enquiries after the Causes of the Lord's taking such a Course to know, that so it seemeth good in his Eyes, who is free to bestow his Favours and Mercies, in what Time, and after what Method and Manner he will; and that how blind so ever we be, and Ignorant in this Matter; yet he is the only wise God, and doth all Things well, and wisely, according to the Counsel of his own will. We may safely consider what is the native Language and Design of such a Dispensation, to the End, we may in the Frame of our Hearts, and as to our Comportment comply with it sweetly.

For this End therefore, let us take Notice of these Particulars, as the Design of such a Dispensation that we, by our unanswerable Carriage, may no frustrate this holy Design.

First, Hereby, as the Mercy long looked for is the welcomer when it cometh, and is the more prize and valued, (for what lightly cometh, lightly go-

eth, as we say) so the Fidelity, Truth and Unchangeableness of God is hereby the more observed, and made remarkable: It is then seen, when after long waiting, the Promise is made good, that the Truth of God is great unto the Clouds, *Psal. 57. 10.* and *108. 4.* and *36. 5.* and that his Faithfulness is great, *Lam. 3. 23.* and is unto all Generations, *Psal. 119. 80.* so that no delay, no Revolutions or Changes, no Alterations in Generations, can cause the least Change in him. Thus he magnifieth his Word of Promise, above all his Name, *Psal. 138. Verse 2.* There are two Things that contribute unto the setting forth and exalting of the Truth, and Faithfulness of God, at such a Time; the one upon the Part of the Enemies, and the other on the Part of God's own People. The Enemies wax the more proud and insolent, Providence seeming to favour them, and smile upon their Counsels; and so take Incouragement from the Lord's delaying to appear for his People, to continue in their oppressing Courses; saying, God hath forsaken them, persecute and take them, for there is none to deliver them; as David's Enemies said of him, *Ps. 21. 11.* They use to mock and taunt his People, and to cast up this their Confidence and Hope unto them, saying, Where is the God upon whom you have relied, your Confidences are vain? Where is he of whom you said, That he would come and save? As they upbraided Christ, while upon the Cross, with this, He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him, *Mat. 27. Verse 43.* *Psalm. 22. 8.* There Cometh to be Scoffers (as Peter speaketh, *2 Peter 3. 4.*) walking after their own Lusts, and saying, Where is the Promise of his coming: So upon the other Hand, his own People are not far from questioning the Truth of the Promises, and from saying, That all Men are liars, as David did in his haste, *Psalm. 116. 11.* and are depending through Faithfulness, and saying with the Psalmist, *Ps. 77. 7, 8, 9.* Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? is his Mercy clean gone for

for ever? doth his Promise fail for evermore? hath God forgotten to be Gracious? hath he in his Anger shut up his tender Mercies? Selah. Now, when Matters are thus, no Flesh expecting or looking for his coming: Enemies free of the Fear of it, and his own People void of the Faith and Hope of it, his coming and appearing is the more glorious and remarkable, as being the more surprising. Hear what the Church said, Ps. 126. 1, 2, 3. *When the Lord turned again the Captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream; Then was our Mouth filled with Laughter, and our Tongue with singing: Then said they among the Heathen, The Lord hath done great Things for them: The Lord hath done great Things for us; we are glad.* The Mercy being so little expected and looked for, when it came, filled all with Amazement, and constrained very Heathens to say, *The Lord had done great Things for them.* There was then a remarkable Greatness seen in the Mercy.

Secondly, Hereby are the Graces of God's Spirit in them brought to the Trial, and put to further Exercise.

As 1. Their *Faith* is hereby tried and exercised: Now it is seen, whether they have *Faith* or not; whether they can hang upon an Hair of the Promise, and over the Belly of much Improbability, many Difficulties, many Disappointments, yet cleave to the Word of Promise, and rely upon the pure Word of God: Then it will be seen who have *Faith*, who not, and who have *Faith* in Exercise, who not: God will certainly avenge his own Elect, and that speedily, Luke 18. Verse 8. and yet Christ addeth, *Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find Faith on the Earth?* Thus are they called to the Exercise of pure *Faith*, to a relying on the Faithfulness of God, as Abraham did, Rom. 4. 19, 20, 21. And being not weak in *Faith*, he considered not his own body, now dead, when he was about an hundred Years old; neither yet the deadness of Sarah's Womb: He staggered not at the Promise of God, through Unbelief, but was strong in *Faith*, giving glory to God: And being fully perswaded, that what he had pro-

wised,

nised, he was able to perform. But of this Exercise of Faith, we shall speak more hereafter.

2. Their Hope is hereby tried and exercised: Then it is found, who can in Hope believe against hope, as is said of Abram, Rom. 4. 18. who can swim, with their Head born up above the Water by Hope, against both Tide and Stream; this is the proper Season for Hope: For we are saved by Hope; but Hope that is seen is not Hope; for what a Man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with Patience wait for it, Rom. 8. Verse 24, 25. How oft is it found, at such a Time, that many are saying with the Children of Israel, Ezek. 37. 11. Our Bones are dried, and our Hope is lost, and we are cut off for our Parts?

3. Their Patience likewise is hereby tried and exercised. Now is the Time of Patience; you have need of Patience, said the Apostle, Vers. 36. Hope is accompanied with Patience; for we hear of the Patience of Hope, 1 Thes. 1. 3. and the Trial of Faith worketh Patience, Jam. 1. 3. and Patience must have its Work, its perfect Work, Verse 4. Many a Time we grow impatient under his Delays, and this occasioneth fretting and repining, when we should be patient in waiting for Christ, 2 Thess. 3. Verse 5. and should, according to that Psalm 37. 7. rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him; fret not thy self, because of him, who prospereth in his Way, because of the Man, who bringeth wicked Devices to pass. He thinketh good to suffer the wicked to prosper, and to delay his coming to overturn their Courses, and to deliver his People, that they may learn Patience, and do as David did, Ps. 40. 1. I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me, and heard my Cry: Abraham, after he had patiently endured, obtained the Promise, Heb. 6. 15.

4. Their Grace of waiting, which always accompanieth Patience, or is rather Patience drawn out to its just Duration, is hereby also tried and exercised. Then it is seen, who dare not say, This Evil is of the Lord; why shuold I wait any longer? We are oft hasty, and

would avenge our selves; and will not, or cannot wait God's Time and Leisure. Say nos thou (said the wise Man, Pro. 20. 22.) I will recompense Evil: Wait on the Lord and he shall save thee. That was a noble Resolution of the Church, Micah 7. 7. Therefore I will look unto the Lord, I will wait for the God of my Salvation. And what a Time this was, the preceeding Verses, from the beginning of the Chapter, show, and of Esaias in a Case not unlike, Isai. 8. 17. And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his Face from the House of Jacob, and I will look for him. See the like, Psal. 123. The Church was exceedingly filled with the scorn of those that were at ease, and with the contempt of the proud, Verse 3. 4. And what doth she resolve upon? Unto thee lift I up mine Eyes; behold, as the Eyes of Servants are unto the Hand of their Masters, as the Eyes of a Maiden unto the Hand of her Mistress; so our Eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have Mercy upon us, Verses 1, 2.

5. Their Submission, a suitable and commendable Grace, is at such a Time as this tried also and exercised: How oft doth the Corruption of our Hearts prompt us to a rebelling against the Lord, when we meet with Disappointments; our fretting and repining say, that our Hearts do not say, The will of the Lord be done; and that our wills are not brought to bow and yield unto the holy and wise will of God. We would rule and govern all our selves; and have all Things absolutely at our Disposal, and do not sweetly comply with the holy will of God, and subject our selves in all Points thereunto. And the Lord by his deposing discovereth this, and bringeth it to Light, which otherwise mightly long hid and undiscerned, and so be little mourned for; and by thus discovering our Sin, he pointeth forth the contrary Duty, and putteth to a minding and studying of it, that we may carry, as acknowledging him alone to be God, and absolute Sovereign, who may come and bestow his Favours, after what Manner, and in what Time, he seeth

seeth good; who as he hath absolute Power, so he is only wise, and can time Things best.

Thirdly, Hereby, he sets them to and keeps them in the Exercise of several Duties: As,

1. To a serious Study of his Word of Promise, that hereby Faith and Hope may be fed and strengthened: This is a consulting of the Oracle of God, and an allowed prying into the Revelations of his Mind: Thus were the Fathers and Prophets of old exercised, in reference to the promised Salvation, in and through the premised Messiah, as Peter tells us, *1 Peter 1. 10, 11.* Of which Salvation the Prophets have inquired, and searched diligently, who prophesied of the Grace unto you: Searching what, or what Manner of Time, the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify, when it testified before Hand the Sufferings of Christ, and the Glory that should follow. Daniel also searched Books, even the Prophecy of Jeremias, to see when the captivity would end, *Daniel 9. 2.*

2. This Instance of Daniel mindeth us of another Duty, called for by such a Dispensation; and that is, instant Prayer, and Supplication: As we see in Daniel's Practice, *Chap. 9.* the Lord's delayings are not to cause us grow slack in our Duty of Prayer; but rather to make us double our Diligence, and to *see our Face unto the Lord, to seek by Prayer and Supplications with Fasting and Sackcloth and Ashes,* *Daniel 9. 3.* The Lord loves to have his People wrestling with him by Prayer and Supplication: That is a remarkable Word, *Cant. 2. 14.* O my Dove, in the clefts of the Rock, in the secret of the Stairs; let me see thy Countenance, let me hear thy Voice, for sweet is thy Voice; and thy Countenance is comely. He loveth to have them wringing (as it were) a Mercy that he mindeth to give out of his Hand; as Parents love to have their Children wringing an Apple out of their Hands; hence when he mindeth to bestow a Favour on his Church, or on a Person, he usually poureth out a Spirit of Prayer upon his own, more at that Time, than before: *For he will*

be inquired of the House of Israel, for the Mercies he hath promised, and mindeth to bestow, Ezek. 36. 37.

3. By this Dispensation he calleth to the Study and Exercise of Repentance, and of godly Sorrow; and for this End, to a searching of our Ways, that the Sight and Sense of them might lay us in the Dust, and cause us think of that Duty of Repentance, and turning again to the Lord; for this is his usual Method. Therefore to move Judah unto this Exercise, that the evil Day might be prevented, that otherwise would certainly come upon them, he sets Jeremiah a proclaiming to Israel, who were long since carried away to Assyria, Peace and Restoration, and many great and glorious Favours, on Condition of their Repentance, saying, Jer. 3. 13. Only acknowledge thine Iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God, &c. Jeremiah taught this Exercise to the People, while in Captivity in Babylon, Lam. 3. Verse 4. Let us search and try our Ways, and turn again to the Lord. And the Lord giveth this Lesson also by Hosea, Chap. 14. Verse 1, 2, 3.

4. So are they called hereby unto the Exercise of humility, and a stooping under the holy and righteous Hand of God, acknowledging that he is righteous and just in all his Ways, and that we are punished less than our Iniquities do deserve. Thus did Jeremiah also teach the People to carry in the Captivity, Lam. 3. 22. It is of the Lord's Mercies, that we are not consumed, because his Compassions fail not. Wherefore doth a living Man complain, a Man for the punishment of his Sins? The Lord did promise this, 2 Chron. 7. Verse 14. If my People, which are called by my Name, shall humble themselves, and pray and seek my Face, and turn from their wicked Ways; then will I hear from Heaven, and will forgive their Sin, and will heal their Land. See 2 Chron. 12. Verse 6. 7. and 33. Verse 12. That Duty pressed by Peter, 1 Peter 4. Verse 6. is especially called for, at such a Time as this, Humble your selves therefore under the mighty Hand

Hand of God, that he may exalt you in due Time: And this also pointeth forth God's usual Method of exalting such, as he bath laid low by Affliction, to wit, after they have humbled themselves under his Hand, and taken with the Punishment of their Sins, and are ascribing the glory of holy Justice and Righteousness unto the Lord, and made to wonder at his rich Mercy, that he hath not made an utter end of them, and consumed them off the Face of the Earth.

Fourthly, The Lord thinketh good to follow this Way, that his People may get deeper Impressions, both of what they are themselves, and of what an one he is: Hereby they have fair Occasion to study and be impressed with the Sense and Thoughts of their own vileness, hardness of Heart, impenitency ; and great unworthiness : Also to get suitable Thoughts of God, in his absolute Sovereignty, impressed on our Hearts, that we may be far from limiting the holy One of Israel, and from prescribing Times, or Ways, or Methods unto him ; and look upon all, as Acts of sovereign free Grace.

Fifthly, By this Means, the Lord discovereth the sincerity of some, and the hollow Heartedness of many ; and also the weakness of not a few. When Trials continue, and Years pass over, many Harvests and Summers, and no Delivery cometh ; then it will be seen, who will adhere unto the Lord, and who not : Some, it may be, would not believe that they had Faith in God, or Love to him ; but when Afflictions are laid upon their Loins, and many Years go over their Head, without any Appearance of an Out-gate ; and yet for all that, they cannot be induced to depart from the Lord, or turn their back upon his Cause and Interest ; then their Faith and Love will appear to be what it is. Others would possibly hold out a Trial for a few Days, and if they thought that the Lord would return with Mercy and loving Kindness, within a few Months, or within a very few Years : But when Year after Year, the trouble continueth

continueth, and no Outgate appeareth, so much as probable, their Hearts faint, and their Strength faileth them, and they can stand out no longer; a long lasting Trial is a searching discovering Thing; so that thereby some will see and be convinced of their own weakness, who would take with no such Conviction before, but thought they could ride out the Storm, as long as others. We may see, what a continuing Temptation was like to do, and did in a great Part, unto the Psalmist, *Psal. 73.* when he said, Verse 13. *Verily I have cleansed my Heart in vain, and washed my Hands in Innocency.* Others in whom is not the Root of the Matter, though Shame, and Love to a Name, and some such like corrupt and selfish Considerations, may prevail with them to ride out a short Storm; whom the Lord will discover, by delaying the dawning of the Day of his Return, and of his overturning the Way of the wicked: A longer Time of Trial will discover the Rotteness of the Heart of many a Professor, who in the beginning of the Storm seemed stout, and as ready to continue to the End, as others. And verily, Enemies are hereby more discovered; for the longer the Lord delayeth, in his Providence, he seemeth to shine more upon their Counsels; so that what at first they did much doubt of the lawfulness of, though the wickedness of their Heart did drive them on to it, they become, through the snare of Prosperity, more confirmed in; and thereby also more deeply rooted in their Opposition to the Ways of God, and further off from the Reach of any Conviction. So also this occasioneth their Growth in Malice, Rage, and Opposition; for then they have no Fear, or Apprehension that ever there will be a Change; and hereby they are incouraged to give Vent to all that latent Cruelty, and pure Enmity, that if the Day of their Prosperity had been short, or they had feared a sudden Change, they would have in a great Measure suppressed. Thus also, the Lord granteth Time to the Amorites, to fill up their Cup, which because larger, and

and because the Lord mindeth to proportion the Vials of his Wrath thereunto, he in his holy Justice, suffereth them to prosper a long Time, for this End, that the World may see, how righteous he is in their Destruction, when they have heard of their Cruelty, and Rage against the People of God, for so long a Time.

Sixtly, Hereby the Lord is preparing his People for the Mercy intended; and a few Years will not serve to this Purpose: Many Corruptions are cleaving so fast unto them, that no less will rub these off, than the sharp File of Affliction for many Years together. So wedded are they unto the World, and to the Pleasures, Profits, and other Inticements thereof, that they are not soon weaned therefrom, nor can their Affections begot soon cooled thereunto. Much formality and deadness, through long Prosperity, groweth and taketh deep Root in them; and a short Time of Trial will not purge them sufficiently therefrom: Pride and Self-conceit doth make them swell to a too great Bigness to be cured in a few Days. Humours have grown fast, and have got a deep Seat in them, that gentle Purges will not serve to purge them away: They must be made meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light; and to this End, they must be strengthened with all might, according to his glorious Power, unto all Patience and Long-suffering with Joyfulness, Colos. I. 11, 12. If the Delivery and Outgate came, ere they were humbled for their former Sins and Provocations, neither would the Mercy have its due Esteem with them, nor could they be duly thankful therefore; nor could they make a right Use thereof; but by abusing it, and turning God's Grace into Wantonness and lasciviousness, bring more Guilt upon themselves; and thereby hasten a more dreadful Change, and raw fader Strokes out of the Hand of God.

Seventhly, The Lord is hereby carrying on a Work of Judgment; punishing many for the Abuse of the

Former Days of Peace and Prosperity, which they have enjoyed ; and for their unsuitable Carriage in the Day, when the Storm began to blow : The People *Israel* were to wander fourty Years long in the Wilderness, until all that Generation, that came out of Egypt, and provoked the Lord by their Impatience and Unbelief, should die therein : Therefore will the Lord prolong the dark Night, until few or none of those, who have seen the great and wonderful works of the Lord, be left to see the Foundation of the New Temple laid. He hath a Controversie with a sinful Generation, that have corrupted their Ways, and fallen from their first Love and Zeal, and he will plead that with them, and delay the Delivery, until he hath sweeped them off the Face of the Earth, that others may take warning, and fear to walk in the Footsteps of their Fathers.

Rightly. As the Lord is calling his People in that Day to wait; so he is waiting that he may be gracious, *Isai. 30. 18.* And therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you : And therefore till he be exalted what he may have Mercy upon you, &c. He is waiting until the fit Time, Season and Opportunity come, wherein his Hand will be most seen and remarked, his Faithfulness, Power and Grace most observable : As when the Enemy is highest, and most secure, and in their own Apprehension, and in the Apprehension of all, who reason according to humane probability furthest from any hazard of being turned upside down, and are insulting most over the People of God, and behaving themselves strangely, and saying, Our Hand, and not the Lord's hath done all this, *Deut. 32. Verse 26. 27.* And when his People are lowest, their Power is gone, and there is none shut up or left, *Verse 36.* He is waiting until he have performed his whole work upon mount Zion, and on Jerusalem ; and then will he punish the Fruit of the stout Heart of the King of Assyria, and the glory of his high Looks, *Isai. 10. Verse 12.* Thus the Lord is a very present help in Trouble, *Psal. 45.*

46. 1. Even when he seemeth to delay longest, he is hastening : For he is making all ready against the fit Season, and is a waiting that Day and Hour, wherein his appearing shall be most to his own glory, and to his Peoples real Advantage ; as also unto the greater Confusion of his Enemies.

The Consideration of these Things, should have this double Effect upon us.

First, We should hereby be induced to guard against these Evils, that we are most ready to be transported with at such a Time. Such as, 1. *Faithlessness*, causing us doubt and question if ever the Lord will return, and build up his Zion, and take his Power to him again and reign ; even though this be the peculiar and proper Season, wherein Faith should affect most lively, and distinctly. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established, said *Isaiah*, Chap. 7. 9. and it was good King *Jehosaphat's* Advice to the People, when the Children of Moab and Ammon were come against them, 2 Chron. 20.20. — Believe in the Lord, your God, so shall you be established ; believe his Prophets, so shall ye prosper. 2. *Fretting, grudging and repining*, at the Lord's delay, which is the bitter Fruit of our Pride, however we may colour it over, with fair pretexts of Zeal for his glory, and an earnest Desire to see his Kingdom coming : Though we may so far smoother this, as that it shall not appear in our Words and Speeches ; yet he who searcheth the Heart and Reins, may espy much of it lying and working there. 3. *Fainting, despondency of Spirit, and sinking through Discouragement* : As if there were no Hope, Men as if they were travailing with Child, every Man with his Hands on his Loins, as a Woman in travail : And all Faces turned into paleness ; As it is, Jer. 30. 6. And why ? Because it was the Time of Jacob's trouble, and the Day was great, and there were none like it, as it is, Verse 7. And yet there was no Cause for this, because it is added, But he shall be saved out of it. And again Verse 8. For it shall come to pass in that Day, saith the

Lord of Hosts, that I will break his Yoke from off thy Neck, and will burst thy Bands ; and Strangers shall no more serve themselves of him. 4. Hence followeth another Evil, so wit, *Impatience*, and *Wearying*, which maketh Way for a sinful departing from the right Way of the Lord, and for a compliance with the wicked in their Prosperity ; or for a detestable neutrality or indifference in the Ways of the Lord. This is a putting out of the Hand to Sin, that we should in a special Manner guard against in such a Day ; for it is the Thing the Devil mainly intendeth and driveth at, by his working together with the Workers of Iniquity, his Instruments and Servants in the Design. 5. We would beware of a sinful hastning, another Fruit of Impatience and Unbelief ; for he who believeth, doth not make haste, *Isaia. 28. 16.* as one ashamed and put to Confusion, as the Words are rendered in the New Testament, *Rom. 9. 33.* and *10. 11.* *1 Peter 2. 6.* And this hastning appeareth in our readiness, to comply with sinful Means and Overtures, promising either an Outgate, or a more tolerable Life under the Affliction ; whereby, instead of any Relief, we wreath the Yoke of Bondage more straitly about our Necks. 6. We would beware of limiting the holy One of *Israel*, as the *Israelites* did in the Wilderness, *Psalms 78. 41.* whether it be unto a Time when he should deliver us, or unto the Manner how, or unto the Instruments and Means by which, shall we think to lay Commands on him, as to Things to come, concerning his Sons, and the Work of his Hands ? Shall we thus strive with our Maker ? See *Isaia. 45. 11.* where the Words should be better read interrogatively, by Way of Challenge thus, *Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel and his Maker, Do ye ask me of Things to come, concerning my Sons and the Work of my Hands, will ye command me ?* And from the Context it is plain, that he was hereby putting them from quarrelling at his Way, in bringing about their Delivery out of Babylon, by *Cyrus* a stranger ; whereas, it is like they would rather have had it done by themselves, that they

they might share in the glory; 7. We would beware of continuing in old Sins, which have procured the Stroke, at the Hands of the Lord: That was whereof Jeremiah complaineth, Chap. 5. 3. O Lord, are not thine Eyes upon the Truth? Thou hast striken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive Correction; they have made their Faces harder than a Rock, they have refused to return. And this will but bind the Yoke more upon us, and make our Case worse, Isai. 9. Verse 12, 13. — For all this his Anger is not turned away, but his Hand is stretcht out still: And why? For the People turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of Hosts. And it will provoke the Lord to punish us yet seven Times more, and that four Times told. See Levit. 26. 18, 21, 24, 28. 8. We would beware of adding new Sins unto our old; for thereby we shall but bring on upon our selves now judgments, instead of being freed from the old. We know what provoked the Lord to cause the People of Israel wander in the Wilderness fourty Years: But withall, their other Sins made their Life far more bitter, than otherwise it would have been; for thereby they brought upon themselves many wasting Strokes. They committed Fornication, and for that Cause, there fell in one Day three and twenty Thousand: They tempted Christ, and were destroyed of Serpents; they murmured, and were therefore destroyed of the Destroyer. And all these Things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our Admonition, upon whom the Ends of the World are come, 1 Cor. 10. 8, 9, 10, 11.

Secondly, We would endeavour after a right Frame of Spirit, under such a Dispensation, whereby in the whole Frame of our Soul, and in our whole Deportment, we may comply with the Lord's Desires, in that Dispensation; and so, 1. Consider the Voice and Language of that Dispensation, hear what it saith, Micah 6; v. 9; and read what is written there-

upon;

upon ; for frequently it is found, that the Rode hath the Sin that procured it, written on its Back, either more darkly, or more distinctly and legibly : It were a suitable Work and Study in such a Day, to be searching out Iniquities, and enquiring after the Causes of the Lord's Indignation and Wrath, with a Purpose, after Discovery made, to repent of them, and relinquish them, that the Lord might hasten his Return. 2. Mind the Exercise of those Graces, which such a Dispensation calleth for, and were formerly mentioned. 3. We would also comply with the Lord's Design in this Dispensation, as to the Duties formerly mentioned, and especially called for at such a Time. 4. When he is making Discoveries hereby, whether of our own Weakness, or of the Weakness of others, or of the Rage and Cruelty of Adversaries, let us not murmur, nor grieve, but adore and submit, give him Glory, and let us lay our Hand upon our Mouth. 5. Is he purging and purifying the Sons of Levi ? Is he casting his Church in the Fire, that she may be purged from her Dross ? Let us comply with that Design, and not sinfully desire to be out of the Furnace, till our Dross and Tin be removed. Should not we suffer him to purge his Floor ? Mat. 3. 12. and to purge the Sons of Levi, as Gold and Silver, even though he should be like a Refiner's Fire, and like Fuller's Sope ; so that none may abide the Day of his coming, or stand when he appeareth, seeing all this is, that they may offer unto the Lord an Offering in righteousness, and their Offerings may be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the Days of old, and as in former Years, Mat. 3. 2, 3, 4. The Consideration of that, which we have, Isa. 4. 3, 4, 5. should quiet our Spirits. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the Living in Jerusalem. When the Lord shall have washed away the Filth of the Daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the Blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof.

by the Spirit of Judgment, and by the Spirit of Burning. And the Lord will create upon every Dwelling-place of mount Zion, and upon her Assemblies, a Cloud, and Smoke by Day, and the shining of a flaming Fire by Night ; for upon all the Glory shall be a Defence. Should it not make our Souls quiet, and cause us sweetly acquiesce, when we read Isa: 27. 9. By this therefore shall the Iniquity of Jacob be purged ; and this is all the Fruit to take away his Sin ? Should not the Consideration of this, cause us say with the Church, Micah 7. v 9. I will bear the Indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, and sing upon the Account of what we read, Ezek. 20. 37, 38. And I will cause you to pass under the Rod, and I will bring you into the Bond of the Covenant ; and I will purge out from among you the Rebels, and them that transgress against me, &c. 6 If he be preparing us for a Mercy, and putting us in Case to improve and make a good Use of a Mercy, and of a Delivery when it is given, why should we not comply with this ? Why we not be a Co-worker with God in this ? What would a Delivery do to us, if we were not fit for it ? We may get our Desires granted, and he may send Leanness withall into our Souls, Psal. 106. 15. And where will be our Advantage then ? If we had a Delivery, ere we were in good Case for it, how long would it prove a Delivery unto us ? Is a Body full of gross Humours, fit to receive and get Advantage by Cordials ? Would not these contribute to the increasing of the Sickness ? If then the Lord, the only wise Physician for Souls, and for Churches, think it best to give us purging Potions, and hold us under a sharp Diet, and hold all Cordials from us, should we not suffer him to take his own wise Way ? Should we pretend to more Skill than he hath ? Will he first have our Humours purged away, let us not cross him in this ? Will he have us in the Wilderness first, and keep us a long Time there, before he speak to our Hearts ? as Hos: 2. 14. Why should
be

he not have his will ? 7. Is the Lord waiting his own Time, wherein to shew himself gracious ? Why would we have him to anticipate his own Time ? Is not every Thing best in its own proper Season ? and knoweth not he the fittest Season for his own appearing ? Knoweth not he when it is best for him to shew forth his Grace, Mercy, Power, Justice, Glory and Faithfulness ? he will hasten every Thing in his Time, *Isa: 60. 22.* Let us then wait, while his good Time come, and say, *Even so come, Lord Jesus. Amen.*

CHAP. III.

What that Life is, that is had by Faith, in a Time of outward Trouble.

WE have seen in Part what that Lot is, which the People of the Lord have to look for, and expect in this World. The next Thing that we are to speak unto, is, their Privilege and Advantage, even in such a Day ; though others may suppose, that their Lot and Life is a very bitter and undesirable Condition, and their Enemies may intend no less than their Ruin and Destruction, yet the supreme God and Governor of the World, and their God in Christ, hath ordered Matters otherwise ; so that, even when their Condition outwardly, and in the Eyes of the World, is as evil as it can be, they are made Partakers of a Life, and may, if they will not sit in their own Light, and foolishly prejudge themselves of the rich

rich and excellent Advantages they may have, enjoy a sweet and comfortable Life.

The Condition of the People of God at this Time, to which the Text relateth, was, as we have seen, sad upon many Accounts ; yet we see, that there is a Life to be had in that Death ; for even then the just liveth by Faith. Let the Day be never so dark and dismal, let the Affliction and Persecution be never so sad and sharp ; let their outward Lot and Condition be never so lamentable and deplorable, yet they may have a Life of it ; and there are sure Grounds, whereupon they may promise to themselves and expect a Life of it ; so that they may say with the Apostle, 2 Cor: 4. 8, 9, 10, 11. *We are troubled on every Side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the Body, the Dying of the Lord Jesus, that the Life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our Body; For we which live are alway delivered unto Death for Jesus Sake, that the Life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal Flesh.*

As to this Life, I do not think, that a temporal outward Life is here at all, or at least not principally to be understood ; for though it be true, that even the outward and bodily Life, and its Preservation in an evil Time, be a great Mercy, Jer. 45. last, and 39. 18. and much sought for and regarded by his People, and sometime also promised as a special Favour ; as the Places cited shew, yea, and granted is a great Mercy and Favour, as we find it was done to David many a Time, and to Daniel, and to the three Children, and others ; though also all the Children of God may expect this, so far as the Lord shall see fit for his own Glory, and for their real Good and Advantage ; yet the Life that is here principally, if not only to be understood, is a Life, that Distresses, Tribulations, Persecutions, Hardships, Wants and Wantings, and all such Afflictions, as make that outward Life in a Manner no Life, *Vitam minime visalem,* cannot

cannot wrong or undo, a Life that Death it self cannot rob a Man of, so as he may say with David, Psal. 23. 4. *Yea though I walk through the Valley and Shadow of Death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy Rod and thy Staff they comfort me.* It is then a spiritual Life, that is here understood, whereof Believers are in Part, and may be more made Partakers of, in a Day of outward Calamity and Distress.

To the End, we may explain this in some Measure, we shall speak a little to these three Things.

1. We shall point at some things, to shew what a Life this is.

2. We shall mention some of those Evils, which this Life freeth the Soul from.

3. We shall point forth some of those sweet Effects, which this Life produceth in the Soul, in a Day of Anguish and Distress.

As to the First, What this Life is, that is, and may be had in an evil Time. That we may know something of this, we would consider the many several Sorts of Life that are in this Life, as

1. There is the Life of *Justification*, whereby the Believer liveth in the Favour of God, as reconciled unto him, through Jesus Christ, having his Sins pardoned, and being accepted in the Beloved. This is indeed a noble and excellent Life, which these same Words, *the just shall live by Faith*, elsewhere speak to, and hold forth, Rom: 1: 17. Gal: 3: 11. Now this Life can, and will be kepted, notwithstanding of all that Devils and Men can do, let them oppress, persecute, kill, wound, imprison, hunt, harass, and do what they please, they shall never annul the Band and Relation that is betwixt the Lord and them. They shall never make them less lovely, less gracious and acceptable in the Eyes of the Lord; their State shall remain fixed as a Rock, whereupon the Waves may beat and break themselves too in vain, they may hunt and banish them from their native Soil, their natural Relations, Friends and

Acquaintances;

Acquaintances ; but they cannot, by all that they can do, banish or chase them out of the Favour of God, notwithstanding of all that Enemies can do, in whose Mouth is no faithfulness, whose inward Part is very wickedness, whose Throat is an open Sepulchre, and who flatter with their Tongue, Psal. 5. 9. the righteous Will be blessed, and with Favour God will crown or compass them, as with a Shield, Verse 12. and in this Favour of God is their Life, Psal. 63. 3. Yea, even when the Lord is by these outward sad Dispensations, brought about instrumentally by wicked and malicious Enemies, shewing his fatherly Anger and Displeasure, yet his loving Kindness remaineth, Psal. 89. 31, 32, 33, 34. If they break my Statutes, and keep not my Commandments, then will I visit their Transgression with the Rod, and their Iniquity with Stripes. Nevertheless my loving Kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my Faithfulness to fail. My Covenant will I not break, &c. So that here is a Life, that the just may and shall live in the worst of Times, let Devils and Men do what they will.

2. There is a Life of Sanctification, whereby the Believer is renewed in the whole Man after the Image of God, is made Partaker of the Divine Nature, hath a Seed and Principle of Grace within him ; yea, the sanctifying Spirit of God dwelling in him, and working in him the Works of God. Now this Glorious and Divine Life, a Believer may, and shall live in the midst of all outward Perplexities and Deaths. It is true, Satan may play his Game at such a Time, and outward Temptations, and inward Corruptions may conspire together, to hinder the free Growth and Exercise of this Life of Grace, and may for a Time so far prevail, that there may appear no more Fruit, Blossoms, or Leaves, than are to be seen on a Vine Tree in Winter, yet even during that sharp and cold Winter Season, Life will remain in the Root, and the Tree will not be as Fewel for the Fire ; so Believers will have the Root and Seed remaining in them, and will not be like Trees twice

be like Trees twice dead, plucked up by the Roots. As to this, the Ports of Hell shall not prevail against them, *Matt: 16. 18.* They shall never perish, neither shall any Man pluck them out of Christ's Hand and Christ's Father, who gave them to him, is greater than all; and no Man is able to pluck them out of his Hand, *John 10. 28, 29.* Nay, so far is it from this, that, as such Days of Calamity and Trial give fair Occasion for the special Exercise of some Graces, and are thereunto appointed, such as Faith in the Promises, Repentance, because of provoking Sins, Self-examination, or searching of our Ways, Hope, Patience, and the like; so through the rich Grace of God it is oftentimes found, that the Children of God grow more, both downward, in self-abasing, Humility, &c. and upward in Love to God, and Zeal for his Interest, Love to the Brethren, Mortification as to the Pleasures, Honours, and Riches of the World, Heavenly-mindedness and the like, in such evil Days; so that their Winter Days (as to such outward Exercises and Dispensations) are their best Days, their best thriving Days, and their most fruitful Days. The very Experiences we have recorded of *David* in the *Psalms*, may be a sufficient Confirmation of this: There was more of the Exercise of the Grace of God to be seen in all his Way, while he was hunted and persecuted by *Saul*, and his wicked Court, than when he was sitting on his Throne in Peace and Quietness. See what himself saith, *Psal: 119: 67.* Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I kept thy Word. And again Verse 71. It is good that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy Statutes. This we may see also verified in the Church of *Thessalonica*, when *Paul* writeth thus unto them, *2 Thes: 1. Verse 3, 4.* We are bound to thank God always for you, Brethren, as it is meet, because that your Faith groweth exceedingly, and the Charity of every one of you all towards each other aboundeth. So that we our selves glory in you in the Churches of God, for your Patience and Faith, in all

your

your Persecutions and Tribulations, that ye endure. So that we see, even in such evil Days, the righteous can flourish like the Palm-tree, and grow like a Cedar in Lebanon, Psal. 92. 12.

3. There is a Life of Peace, both with God and with themselves, that Believers do, or may win at, even in the Day, when they have no Peace without from Man, even when they can hear nothing from without, but the Sound of the Trumpet, and the Alarm of War ; nothing but Edicts, Proclamations, Interdictions, A&s, Orders, Executions, Marchings, and what of that Nature, that may cause Terror in the Land of the Living, they are allowed to sing a Song of Triumph within themselves ; for when they look up to Heaven, they may see God the Father their fast Friend and Father, Christ Jesus the Lord, their Redeemer, Friend and Advocate, the Holy Ghost, their Comforter, Friend and Supporter. They may see, that having Peace with God, they have Peace with all the Royal Company of Holy Angels ; and looking round about them, they may see, that they are at League with the very Stones of the Field, Job 5. Verse 23. and that the Lord hath made a Covenant for them, with the Beasts of the Field, and with the Fowls of Heaven, and with the creeping Things of the Ground, Hos: 2. 18. So likewise, when they look within themselves, they may find much Peace and Quietness there ; or if Guilt stare them in the Face, as ordinarily Satan will see what he can do at such a Time, to raise a Storm in the Soul, they have the Peace-maker to go to with their Sin and Guilt ; and when they have laid it over on him by Faith, and gotten their Consciences sprinkled in his Blood ; then they may enjoy a great Calm, in the midst of the most terrible Storm of Persecution and Tribulation from Enemies. He will keep him in perfect Peace, (or in Peace, Peace) whose Mind is stayed on him, because he trusteth in him, Isai. 26. 3. Such will have Peace, Peace, all Sorts of Peace, pure and

and perfect Peace, sure and certain Peace, rational and real Peace. The Lord of Peace himself will give them Peace always, by all Means, 2 Thes. 3. 16. This Peace is a Part of the Kingdom of God, Rom. 14. 17. It is also a Part of Christ's Legacy ; and who can take that from them ? John 14. 27. *Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you, not as the World giveth, (falsly, deceitfully, to your Prejudice, and with a Purpose to betray you, when Occasion offereth) give I unto you ; let not your Heart be troubled, neither be ye afraid.* And again, John 16. 33. *These Things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have Peace, in the World ye shall have Tribulation ; but be of good Cheer, I have overcome the World.* This is that Peace of God, which passeth all Understanding, and which keepeth as a Garrison the Heart and Mind, through Jesus Christ, Philip. 4. 7. and what will a strong, well manned, and well provided Garrison care for the loud Noise of a few naked Soldiers ? All the Forces in the World cannot make a Breach in, nor climb over the Walls of this Garrison : No Flesh with all their Terror, can once brangle the inward Peace of a Saint ; they cannot cause a Mutiny there ; their Grenads cannot trouble them, nor harm let be blow up, the Magazine of their Soul. In the midst of all the Confusions and Noises about them, they may be quiet, still, well composed, settled and stayed, like mount Zion, that cannot be moved. Is not this a desirable Life, in such an evil Day ? Was it not well with David, when he was in Ease to say, Psal. 4. 8. *I will both lay me down in Peace, and Sleep ; for thou Lord only makest me to dwell in Safety.* And as it is, Psal. 3. 5. 6. *I laid me down and slept, I awaked, for the Lord sustained me ; I will not be afraid of ten Thousands of the People, that have set themselves against me round about.* He had a great Calm within, through Faith laying hold on God, as his Shield, his Glory, and the Lifter up of his Head, Verse 3. and such a Calm, that all the Noise of the Body of the People with Absalom, pursuing after him, could not disturb

sturb his Rest. This Life delivereth the Believer from that fearful Death of Fear and Fainting, that ready to seize upon them at such a Time; for saith David, Psal. 27. 1, 2, 3. *The Lord is my Light and my Salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the Strength of my Life, of whom shall I be afraid?* When the wicked come upon me, to eat up my Flesh, they stumbled and fell. Though an Host should encamp against me, my Heart shall not fear; though War should rise against me, in this will I be confident. This Life of peace within, causeth a Fixedness of the Heart, that is not reeling, nor stagging, as unsettled; but the Man is as a Rock settled and secured on a firm unmovable Basis: How could David else say, Psal. 57: 4. *My Heart is fixed, O Lord, my Heart is fixed,* when his Soul was among Lions, when he did lie, even among them that were set on Fire, the Sons of Men, whose Teeth are Spears and Arrows, and their Tongue a sharp Sword, as it is, Verse 4. The good upright Man, that feareth the Lord, shall not have Cause to be afraid of evil Tidings, his Heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord: His Heart is established, he shall not be afraid, *Psal. 112. 7, 8.*

4. There is a Life of Access to, and Communion with God, that all the outward Trouble that Men can make, cannot mar, or take away, and which a Believer may enjoy in the worst of Times. Men may cast the Man into Prison, that neither Wife, nor any of his Relations shall have Access to him, to be refreshing and comfortable unto him; but neither Lock nor Key, nor strong Walls, nor Doors can keep out his God from him: Though he may be by Men, so closed up in all Flesh, that in that Respect, his Life may be made bitter unto him; yet he hath free Access to the great God, and to his God and Father, by the Spirit, through Jesus Christ, *Ephes. 2. Verse 18.* and 12. And O! who can express the Good and Excellency of this Life? when they pass thorow the Waters, he will be with them, *Isai. 43. 2.* No Trouble outward can separate betwixt Christ and a believing Soul;

Soul : They may, in their Distress, make their Requests known unto the Lord, by Prayer and Supplication, and hereby enjoy the Company of God ; for in the Day of Trouble they are commanded to call upon him, and he hath promised to deliver, *Psal. 50.*

O ! how sweet converse is this, when the Soul, in the midst of its Trouble, can send a Post to Heaven, and receive a Dispatch ; yea he heareth while ye are but speaking, and as it were writing their Letters, *Isai. 65. 24.* and he is at their Hand, *ou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am,* *Isai. 58. 9.* and that though they were removed to the Ends of the Earth, *Psal. 61. 2.* Afflictions may make some, who were formerly Friends, turn Unfriends, and stand Aloof, *Psal. 69. 8, and 88. 18.* and refuse to befriend a Man, or speak a good Word for him in his Distress. But the Lord will not despise, nor abhor the affliction of the afflicted ; neither hath he hid his Face from him, but when he cried unto him he heard him, *Psal. 22. 24.* When Father and Mother forsake a Man, the Lord will take him up, *Psal. 27. 10.* Is not this a noble Life, that a poor Soul may converse with him, who is King of kings and Lord of lords, and that in the midst of Flames ? Yea, when their Heart is so overwhelmed, and their Pressures so great, and their Bondage so heavy, that they dare not pray, or if they might can get no Words to speak to God ; even then, he will not bide his Ear from their Breathing and their Cry, *Lam. 3. 56.* Yea the Spirit of God within them penneth their supplicating Groanings, and so helpeth their Infirmitie, and maketh intercession for them with Groanings, that cannot be uttered Rom. 8. 26. no Trouble or Distress outward, nor in the Malice or Cruelty of Men, no shutting up can keep out the refreshing Incomes of Peace from the God of all Comfort, or of Joy of the holy Ghost. The God of all Comfort comforteth in all Tribulations, 2 Cor. 1. 3, 4. Yea, as the Sufferings of Christ abound, the Consolations of God can abound through Christ, *Verse 5.* And who can hinder God from speaking Peace to all Men ?

Man's Soul, from pouring in the Oil of Joy, from conveying into his Spirit, a reviving Cordial? And is not such a Life, as this is, can be had in Adversity; may not such be said to live? What wold a Man more? What Life comparable to this?

5. There is a Life of Hope that the Believer may have in so, in a Time of sore Troubles, and of sharp trials. This was to be a Part of the Life of the church, while she was in the Babylonish Captivity, Rom. 3. Verse 21. *This I recal to Mind, therefore I have written it.* Now what was that, which was recalled to Mind? Even that which followeth, Verse 22. 23. It is of the Lord's Mercies, that we are not consumed, because his Commercials fail not; they are new every Morning; great is thy goodness: And chiefly that which followeth, Verse 24. *The Lord is my Portion, saith my Soul; therefore will I give in him.* And David prescribed this as his only Solace, when his Soul was cast down, and disquieted within him, because of the Insolencies, Blasphemies, scoffs, Reproachings of the ungodly Nation, his enemies, Psal. 42. Verse 5. 11. and 43. Verse 5, saying, *As thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the Health of my Countenance, and my God.* Yea such a Life is this, that it cheereth the Soul, and is accompanied with rejoicing, therefore we hear of a rejoicing in Hope, Rom. 12. and 12. 12. Heb. 3. 6. for how deep so ever the Sea of Affliction be, wherein they are tossed, their Head is secured above the Water; he cannot drown, the Wind blow, and Sea rage, as it will. May that Man live in the midst of all the Troubles, who can meet with her, who hath the Helmet of Hope, and the Hope of Salvation (as it is called, 1 Thess. 5. 8.) on his Head? What can he fear that seeth Salvation before him? Can Death be terrible to him, who hath the Hope of eternal Life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the World began? Tit. 1. 2. And daye not they a noble Life, even when in heavie times through many manifold Temptations, whom the Holy and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to

to his abundant Mercy, hath begotten again unto lively Hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, from the Dead, *1 Pet. 1. Verse 3. 6.* How may such sing Sorrow out of Countenance? What will a generous Spirit care for a Blast in his Face, when he is going to possess a Crown?

6. There is a Life of Patience, which Believers may enjoy, in the midst of all the Trials and Tribulations which they do meet with here: In Patience they can possess their Soul, *Luke 21. 19.* and when the Soul is possessed, Life is possessed; as long as a Man is Possessor of his Soul, he is a living Man, but when that is taken away he dieth: Now Patience is the Way to keep the Soul at Home, which impatience, fretting, repining, and wearying thrusts, as it were out of Doors: Now the Believer may win to this Life of Patience, by the God of Patience, *Rom. 15. 5.* who directs into the Patience of Christ, as it is in the Original, *2 Thes. 3. 5.* and strengthened with all Might, according to his glorious Power, unto all Patience and Long-suffering with Joyfulness, *Col. 1. 11.* Yea, the very Tribulation it self, contributeth, through the Blessing of God, unto this Patience; for Tribulation is said to work patience, *Rom. 5. 3:* and the trying of Faith worketh Patience, *James 1. 3:* and by this Patience the Soul is made to wait upon the Lord, and to wait for the Accomplishment of the Promise, *Rom. 8. 25:* and they shall not be ashamed that wait for him, *Is. 49. 23.* The Lord is good to such as wait for him, *Lam. 3. 25.* It is good that a Man should both hope and quietly wait for the Salvation of the Lord, *Verse 26.*

7. There is a Life of Courage, Strength, Resolution, Stedfastness and Throwbearing, to be had in a Day of Trial and Temptation. In the Day when I cried (said David *Psal. 138. 3.:*) thou answeredst me, and Strengthenedst me with Strength in my Soul: So *Psal. 27. 14.* It is the Lord's Advice, wait on the Lord, be of good Courage; and this Promise is added, and he shall strengthen thine Heart, *S. Psal. 31. 24:* When notwithstanding of all that Satan with his Instruments, can do, they are helped to stand fast in the Lord, in one Spirit with one Mind, striving

ther for the Faith of the Gospel, Phil. 1. 27: that is a Life accompanied with great Advantages. When a Soldier keepeth his Ground, and doth not yield a Foot, for all the Onsets and Opposition he meeteth with; what hath he to complain of? Hath he not much to Boast of? Is not his Valour and Courage, his Stedfastness and Resolution, his Glory, notwithstanding of all his sore Work? So when Believers are helped to stand fast in the Faith, to quit themselves like Men, and to become strong, as it is, 1 Cor 16: 13: so that Enemies, for all their Force, Cruelty and Rage, can gain nothing, is not this a noble Life? What would they have more, than to be Conquerours? And are they not Conquerours, when they overcome all the Machinations, Devices, cruel Projects, bloody Consultations, and unmerciful Executions of Adversaries? And do they not overcome, when the Enemies are disappointed of their Ends; and they hold fast the Truth? It is true, they may be killed, sawn asunder, stoned and tortured; but yet for all that, be more than Conquerours through him that loved him.

8. There is a Life of Joy, that may be had, notwithstanding of all outward Pressures: Therefore saith James, Chap. 1. Verse 2. — count it all Joy, when ye fall into diverse Temptations. And Peter saith, 1 Peter 4. 12, 13. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery Trial, which is to try you, as though some strange Thing happened unto you. But Rejoice in as much as ye are Partakers of Christ's Sufferings, that when his Glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding Joy. The Jews here took joyfully the spoiling of their Goods, Heb. 10. 34. And the Lord can strengthen with all might, unto all Patience and Long-suffering with Joyfulness, Col. 1. 11. The scattered Strangers, unto whom Peter wrote, Peter 1. v. 6. were made Partakers of this Life, when he saith of them, Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a Season (if need be) ye are in heaviness, through manifold temptations. The Apostles also experienced this Life,

when they departed from the Presence of the Council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer Shame for his Name, Act. 5. 41. Believers then may enjoy a Life yea, and such a Life as is more than a Life, even a Life of Joy and Gladness, which is the Suburbs of Glory, where Joy shall be full, and Sorrow and Sighing shall flee away, Isa. 35. 10. and 51. Verse 11. Believers know, how far preferable this is unto the painted Joy of the wicked, when they have their best Life in the World, Psal. 4. 7. For as the crackling of Thorns under a Pot, so is the Laughter of a Fool, Eccl. 7. Verse 6.

Secondly Having thus shown what a manifold and multifarious Life, Believers by Faith may win to, in the Midst of all their outward Trouble and Trials: We come, for further Explication of the same, to speak a Word to the Second Thing proposed, to wit, To shew some of those Evils, which this Life freeth the Soul from in such a Time.

1. The Believer by this Life is kepted from heartless Despondency and Fainting, which otherwise he is obnoxious unto, and which proveth oftentimes very noxious and hurtful, as it is an Evidence of much Weakness, and Want of Strength; for (as the wise Man saith, Proverbs 24. 10. if thou faint in the Day of Adversity, thy Strength is small;) an Evil it is that many worthy Ones have been taken with in a Day of Adversity, as Baruch, Jer. 45. 3. Jeremiah himself, Jer. 8. 18. Jonah, Chap. 2. 7. and 4. 8. and the Church, Lam. 1. 12. and 5. 17. and an Evil that is to be feared and guarded against, Heb. 12. 3. Ephes. 3. 13. 2 Thes. 3. 13. An Evil also that hath dangerous Consequences. Now where this Life is, the Soul is guarded from this Evil; and is so steeled and fortified within, that it is not in great Hazard of swooning. When the Soul liveth by Faith, its Head is holden up, the Heart is strengthened with Cordials; there is Access to lay its Head in the Bosom of Christ, and to suck Consolation from him; Heaven is secured, and the everlasting Crown ensured, whereby it is manifest, that there can be no Loss, but Gain; and that Consideration cannot but sup-

ort and strengthen, notwithstanding of many petty losses.

2. By this Life, the Believer is kept from simple Despondency, as if there were no more Hope: As if the Matter were wholly desperate; and all Relief were not only out of Sight, but also out of the Reach of Hope. What a dishonourable Frame of Spirit this is unto God, cannot be bid; seeing it is questioning, if not an express denying both of God's Power, and of his Good Will, Love and Faithfulness. It is a saying, with the House of Israel, *Ezek. 37. 11.*

— Our Bones are dried, and our Hope is lost, and we are cut off for our Part. Now, where this Life is, there is Life of Hope, (as we shewed), and this Helmet of Hope keepeth the Head safe; and beside, it giveth Ground to expect Supplies of Strength, *Psal. 31. 24.* Disappointment to Enemies, *Psal. 38. 15, 16.* constant Protection, *Psal. 33. 18.* Mercy, Verse 22. Pardon, and whatever their Case calleth for, *Psal. 39. 8.*

3. Hereby the Believer is freed from that Evil inward Sorrow, Grief and Vexation of Spirit. Trouble long continued will bring on this Distemper even in the best, as we see in David, *Psal. 31. 9, 10.* Have Mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in Trouble, mine Eye is consumed with Grief, my Soul and my Belly: For my Life is spent with Grief, and my Tears with sighing; my Strength faileth me; because of mine Iniquity, and my Bones are consumed. But afterward, as this Life began to revive and act, we hear somewhat else out of his Mouth, Verse 14. But I trust in thee, O Lord, I said, Thou art my God. Verse 15. My Times are in thy Hand, deliver me from the Hand of mine Enemies, and from them that persecute me. 19. O how great is thy Goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee, &c. 20. Thou shalt hide them in the Secret of thy Presence, from the Pride of Man. — 21. Blessed be the Lord, for he hath shewed me his marvellous

ious Kindness in a strong City. 22. For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine Eyes; nevertheless thou hearest the Voice of my Supplication when I cried unto thee. His concluding Exhortation is also remarkable, Verses 23, 24. ' O Love the Lord all ye his Saints; for the Lord preserveth the Faithful and plentifully rewardeth the proud Doer. Be of good Courage, and he shall strengthen your Heart, all ye that hope in the Lord. Now the great Differences betwixt these two Frames is very obvious; and withall it is manifest, how great the Advantage is, which is had by this Freedom from Sorrow of Heart and Grief of Mind, which maketh the afflicted Man's Case much worse, than it would have been by all the outward Distress.

4. This Life delivereth the Believer from all Soul disquieting and distracting Thoughts and Cares about the Event. It is well known, what Perplexity those Thoughts cause in the Soul; and how they discompose the Spirit of a Man, and put him out of Ease for a right Deportment under the Trial; and of prompteth him to think of unlawful Means of an Outgate: What a Mercy is it then for One, in outward Trouble and Perplexity, to be freed from the distracting Cogitations, that jumble, confuse and perplex the Soul? Now this Life, that may be had by Faith, freeth the Believer from this Evil, or it prompteth the Soul to cast that Burden over on the Lord and to leave it there, and not to be anxious about the Matter, but only to be careful to do its Duty. David prescribeth this Remedy against this Evil, unto his own Soul, as we heard above from Psal 42 and 43. and that thrice over, saying, *Why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God, &c.*

5. Hereby the Soul of a Believer is freed from the Fear of Man, which readily causeth a Snare, Pro 29: 25. and putteth the Soul out of all Christian-composure, quite unhingeth it, that it is fit for no Duty but this Frame of Life dispelleth those dark Clouds

at occasion this Fear, as we see in *David*, 1 Sam: 30. he was greatly distressed; for his own Soldiers make of stoning him; but what doth he? He encouraged himself in the Lord his God; and this put away Distress and Fear. Where this Life is acting, the Man may say with *David*, Psl. 27. 1, 2, 3. *The Lord my Light and my Salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the Strength of my Life, of whom shall I be afraid? Though an Host should encamp against me, my Heart all not fear, &c.*

6. This Life will also free the Believer from thatague of Supidity, Luke-warmness, carnal Security, and Senselessness under sad alarming Dispensations; for this Life is an active Thing, and maketh the Soul quick, agile and lively for God and his Interest, and an Enemy unto Deadness and Laziness in acting.

7. So this Life delivereth the Soul of the Believer from that bitter Humour of quarrelling with the Almighty, fretting and repining against his Dispensations; an Evil that is too too rife, and that puts the Soul utterly out of its Station, and sets it upon plain rebellion against the Lord, and upon a calling of the most High and Supreme Lord unto his Bar, in Stead of that dutiful acknowledging of him for the only Supreme and Absolute Disposer of all, and stooping before him, and saying, His holy Will be done. When the *Psalmist*, Psl. 73. was carried away with his Fit of Passion, he had several unsavoury Expressions; but when this Life began to stir, he presently saw his Mistake, and looked upon himself rather as Beast, than as a Saint, in what he had been and said Verse 22. So Psl 77. the *Psalmist* had some such Fit, and undue Expressions, but at length recovering himself, he saw he was wrong, and that he was ravaging, Verse 10. and afterward hath more savoury, and suitable Expressions of the Lord. This Life discovereth the Lord to be righteous, and their Guilt propounding the Stroke; and thereupon they are made to fly with the Church, Micah 7. 9. *I will bear the Indignation.*

nation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my Cause, &c. The Life of Patience causeth them ly down, and say, Here I am to ly, as long as thou wilst.

Thirdly, As to the 3d Particular, viz. The Effects produced in the Soul by this Life, in such an evil Time: Though by what is already said, many of these may be obvious, and others may easily be collected; yet I shall mention a few, which may give Occasion to think of others; such as these.

1. *Hereby the Soul will be kepted within Sight of God, and see its Duty, in that Day: And this indeed is no small Advantage, for the main Cause or Occasion of Persons, miscarrying in such a Day of Exercise and Affliction, is their neither discovering of God, nor understanding what is Duty; and the last of these doth necessarily attend the other; for when the Lord is set before us always, he giveth Counsel, and our Reins then instruct us in the night Season. Psal. 36: 7, 8. for in his Light we see Light, Psal. 36: 8,*

9. How great then must be the Advantage of this Life, when the Believer thereby be kepted nigh God, who is his Rock, his Strength, his Light and Leader! What can darken his Way, who standeth in the Light of the Lord, and in his Counsel? And what can overmaster him, who is so nigh unto the Strength of Israel? What can affright him from Duty, who hath the Holy and Great God in his View? What can the Fear of those that cause Terror in the Land of the Living do to one, who seeth him, who is invisible? Moses by Faith forsook Egypt, not fearing the Wrath of the King; for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible Heb. 11. Verse 27. The Answer that such will have to give unto all Temptations, will be ready, How shall I do this Thing, and sin against God?

2. *Hereby Believers will be kepted in a calm equal and composed Frame, under the various Changes of Dispensations and Temptations, when Satan is changing Weapons upon them, and sometimes assaulting*

assaulting them with Frowns, and sometimes with Favours, using various and contrary Means and Methods to break them ; they are found on their Feet standing on their Guard, and in their right Posture ; for this Life keepeth them upright, and in a watchful Frame ; blow the Wind out of what Airth it will, out of the North, or out of the South, they are on their Guard, knowing that Satan is restless, and that their Adversary the Devil, as a roaring Lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour. 1 Pet: 5. 8. They are fixed, and not soon moved, or commoved at what occurreth, nor readily tossed hither and yond with every Wind that bloweth ; they can neither be lattered into a forsaking of the Way of the Lord, nor righted from their Duty.

3. This Life is an Enemy to Negligence and Carelessness ; for it setteth the Soul about Duty with all Diligence and Care ; it airtesth the Soul Godward in Prayer, humble waiting and Dependence, according as the Case and the Necessity calleth ; so this Life sendeth the Soul away to God to seek Help. Is it an Hour of Darkness ? then God must be a Light unto him. Is the Duty heavy and difficult ? then everlasting Arms must be had under. Is the Heart like to faint ? Strength must be sought from the God of all strength, and of all Comfort. Are Temptations turning aside, strong and multiplied ? the Allsufficient Supporter must be pleyed so much the more ; and the whole Weight and Burden of the Soul must be laid upon him. Is the Temptation and Difficulty lasting and growing ? He that hath helped in six Troubles, must be sought unto in the seventh ; what time they are afraid, they will trust in him, Psal 56. Verse 3. *As for me, I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me : Evening and Morning, and at Noon will I pray and cry aloud, and he shall hear my Voice,* Psal. 55. Vers. 16, 17.

4. This Life turneth the Soul's Face Godward, how dark and dismal soever the Condition be, where-

in the Believer is. When *Jonah* was in the Belly of the Fish, the Waters compassed him about, even to his Soul, the Depths closed him round about, the Weeds were wrapt about his Head, he went down to the Bottem of the Mountains, the Earth with her Bars was about him; even when he was in such a sad and hopeless Condition, this Life caused him to look towards God's holy Temple; even when his Soul fainted within, he remembred the Lord, and his Prayer came in unto him, into his holy Temple, *Jonah* 2. 1. — 7. When *David* might possibly be driven to the Ends of the Earth, and his Heart be overwhelmed withall; yet he resolved to cry to God, that he might be led to the Rock, that is higher than he, *Psal.* 61. 2. and when his Spirit was overwhelmed within him, then God knew his Path, *Psal.* 142. *Vers.* 3. to wit, that it was Godward, as the *Verse* 5. of that Psalm sheweth.

3. This Life keepeth the Soul in a watching Frame, looking about on all Hands, fearing the Adversary from all Quarters; for the Believer knoweth, that a Time of outward Trouble is a fit Season for Satan, who useth much to fish in troubled Waters to work in; and it is usually found, That that is one of his Market-days, wherein he plyeth his Time with Diligence and Assiduity: So that if the Believer be asleep, or careless, or off his Watch-tower, he becometh a fit Prey for this Adversary; it must therefore be a very great Advantage, to be keeped in a circum-spect watching Posture; and this Life affordeth this Advantage. The Fear of God maketh them always to fear, lest they offend, and to fear the Adversary, and their own treacherous Heart.

6. This Life putteth the Soul in a humble waiting Posture, far from a sinful hastning out of the Trouble, by hearkning to sinful Proposals: He that believeth, will not make haste, but will wait patiently. This was *David's* Posture, *Psal.* 123. 2. and 130. 5, 6. and upon this he pleadeth with God, *Psal.* 52. 9.

and 25. 21. So was it with the Church, Mic. 7. 7. and with *Isaias*, Chap. 8. 17. For by this they are taught to know, that the Lord is absolute and wise ; and therefore, as he cometh when he will, so he cometh in the fittest Season ; and that Waiters have the Promise of throwbearing, Isa: 40. 31. and of Delivery at length, Isa: 49. Verse 23. *Psal.* 37. 9. and are blessed, Isa. 30. 18. and what more can be desired ?

In Reference to our Improvement of this comfortable and Heart-strengthening Truth, we would take Notice of these Particulars;

First, That this Life admitteth of various and different Degrees, and is not alike in all ; some have it in a greater Measure, some in a lesser Measure : For,

1. The Lord may bestow it upon some, in a very large Measure, and in an high Degree, so that they can (as it were) give a Defiance to all possible and contingent Trouble, to do so much as mar their very Musick. *Habbakuk* had no little Share hereof, when he crieth out, Chap. 3. 17, 18. *Although the Fig-tree shall not blossom neither Fruit be in the Vines ; the Labour of the Olive shall fail, and the Fields shall yield no Meat ; the Flocks shall be cut off from the Fold, and there shall be no Herd in the Stalls ; yet will I rejoice in the Lord ; I will jay in the God of my Salvation.* Some may thus be lifted up above all supposable Difficulties, Straits, Dangers, Necessities and Temptations that can interveen, and sing a Triumph, as being more than Conquerours.

2. Others may be so far quickned by this Life, that in a present sad Emergent, and in a sad Push of inevitable Hazard, they may be sustained, and made to stand, as no Way forsaken, or made hopeless : Thus was it with *David*, when his own Soldiers were like to muriny ; yea, and spake of stoning of him, 1 Sam. 30. v. 6. for then he encouraged himself in the Lord.

3. In some it may act so, as though the Soul be not kept from inward Trouble and Disquietment, be-

cause of the outward Affliction and Trials, yet it may discover the Evil, and the Unsuitableness of this disquieted Frame, and convince the Soul, that it ought to be otherwise ; yea, and to put the Believer to a chiding of himself, and to a pleading against his own Soul, as we see in David, *Psal. 42.* and *43.* when discovering what Grounds of Hope and of Confidence in God he had ; for all that was past or present, he smartly taxeth his own Soul, saying, *Why art thou cast down, O my Soul ? Why art thou disquieted within me ?* Whereby he declared, that it was a most groundless and unreasonable Thing, for his Soul to be thus cast down and disquieted.

4. In others it may work to a discerning of their unsuitable Behaviour, when they were standing against the Push of the Temptation, though at the Time, they neither had so much Strength, as courageously to resist, nor so much deliberate and clear Light, as to discover their Mistake with convincing Power, as the Psalmist, *Ps. 73.* got an humbling Sight afterward of his brutish Ignorance, and gross Mistake which he saw not, when he was wrestling with the Temptation. See Verses 3, 13, 15. and 22. compared together. So Asaph being hurried and carried off his Feet, *Psal. 77. 7, 8, 9.* was not in Case to consider Things aright, and therefore discovered his own weakness ; but presently recovering himself, he seeth and confesseth his Infirmitie, *Verse. 10.*

5. In some, when they can get no Light of Comfort, no sensible Incomes of Joy of the Holy Ghost, no sensible Supports of Comfort; nay, possibly no satisfying and Heart quieting Grounds of Hope ; yet this Life may work so, as to keep them from sinking in Despondency, and from crying out, Our Hope is perished, our Hope is gone, and we are cut off for our Part ; and may airth them unto a staying upon the Lord, and ruminating on his Word, as *Isai. 50. 10.* *Who is among you, that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the Voice of his Servant, that walketh in Darkness, and hath no Light,*

Light, let him trust in the Name of the Lord, & stay upon his God.

6. In some, this Life may have no other sensible and apparent Effects for a Time, but a keeping of the Soul from desperate Despondency, and giving over of the Matter, as utterly hopeless and desperate : Though they can give no positive Grounds of Hope and Confidence, either of throw-bearing, or of an Outgate ; yet they dare not positively and plainly assert the contrary ; but they will wait upon *a may be* ; and a *may be* or half a Promise, or half an Hope will so far support them, as that they will not peremptorily say, *My Hope is perished from the Lord, Jonathan was upon a very improbable like Attempt*, and yet this kept up his Spirit, *It may be, that the Lord will work for us* ; for there is no restraint to the Lord, to save by many, or by few, 1 Sam. 14. 6. The submissive Soul will put his Mouth in the Dust, if so be there may be Hope, Lam. 3. Verse. 29.

7. In some, this Life may have this Effect, that though the Temptation be great upon the one Hand, the Hazard great if they stand fast ; and upon the other Hand, the Advantages if Compliance with wicked Courses seemingly great ; yet though they know little what it is to be steeled with inward Influences of Consolations, or of Confirmation, for the establishing of their Heart, in the Day of Trial ; yet they dare not depart from known and received Truths ; nor imbrace the Way of the wicked, and join with them in their sinful Courses. The three Children, how great soever the Temptation was, and howbeit they had no inward Persuasion (as would appear by that Supposition made, Dan. 3. Verse 18. *But if not,*) of the Lord's wonderful delivering them out of the Hand of Nebuchadnezzar : Yet they peremptorily refused to sin, saying, *Be it known unto thee O King, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship thy golden Image, which thou hast set up.*

8. Some, though the torrent of Temptation may suddenly surprize them, and carry them off their Feet, yet this Life will not be quite extinct, it will revive again;

again, after the Swoon is over ; and they will recover their former Health, and possibly with an Addition of more Strength, Courage, Activity and Resolution ; as we see in Peter, who being suddenly surprized, fell into a very dangerous and dead-like Swoon, when he denied his Master, and that with such sad and aggravating Circumstances, yet he recovered Life, at length, after he went out and weeped, and thereafter became the more forward, courageous & resolute.

9. Some, though they have not such a Measure of this Life, as will make them count it all Joy, when they fall into diverse Temptations, and triumphantly to rejoice in their Sufferings ; yet they will have that Measure, as will cause them tremble for the Ark, and will make them creep in Holes to pray for Zion ; and fearing their own Weakness, to pray that God would not lead them into Temptation ; and however Matters go with themselves, they will not take Part with the Workers of Iniquity, but will join rather in Heart and Affection with the People of God.

10. Though some cannot much dispute, plead or contend in the Streets, for oppressed Truth ; yet this Life will prompt them to venture all they have, before they deny Christ, or forsake his Truth and Interest.

Secondly, This Life will not be always alike active, agile sprightly, quick and strong : As it hath its various Measures and Degrees in different Persons ; so it hath its healthful Times, and sickly Times, in one and the same Person, and the Reason is, It is fed and nourished, by the continual Influences of Life, from the Fountain of Life, the Lord of Life ; so that when these come in greater Abundance, this Life is in a more athletick Temper, and they are more robust, and more able to endure and fight ; and again when these are restrained or obstructed, Life, Strength and Vigour decay, and the strong Man becometh weak as a Child : This the frequent Experience of the Saints doth manifest. David at one Time able to leap over Walls, and run thorow Troops, and go

thorow

thorow all Oppositions ; at another Time is fainting, and saying, I shall one Day fall by the Hand of Saul, and calling all Men Liars, *1 Sam. 27. 1. Psal. 116. 11.* How remarkable are these Ups and Downs, wonderful Activity and again fainting, in the Case of Job, as his Book witnesseth. *Jeremiah* is another clear Instance, who, *Chap. 20. 7, 8, 9, 10.* is speaking as one riving in the Height of a Fever, without the Health of an ordinary Christian, murmuring against the Lord, and quarrelling with him, because of the Bitterness of the Life, he had in the Service of the Lord : Immediately he returneth to himself, and wins to the lively Exercise of Faith, and is calling upon all to fall a praising upon his Account, *Verses 11, 12, 13.* and yet in the following Verses, to the end of the Chapter, there is a fearful Relapse into the former Distemper of Raving ; for he speaketh rather like one distract than like a Saint, cursing the Time of his Birth ; and the Man who first brought Tidings to his Father of his Nativity, because he would not bring the Wrath of God upon himself, by murthering him, when new come forth of the Womb.

These two Considerations should make all sober, in their judging of themselves, or of others ; seeing in Times of Trial and Tribulation, all that have the Root of the Matter in them, will not be alike able to ride out the Storm. Every Sea-man is not alike stout in a Storm ; nor is every Soldier alike courageous and valiant in the Day of Battel. Nay, nor is the same Man always the same Man in all Cases. He may be like a Lion to Day, who to Morrow may faint ; the shaking of a Leaf may at on Time make that Man tremble, who at another Time had Courage to run thorow Picks and drawn Swords. Sufferings and a light Deportment in Time of Suffering, are the free Gift of God ; and he is free to give his Gifts, as he will, and to whom he will, *Phil. 1. 29.* Courage, Valour, Constancy, and Strength are the free Gifts of God ; and he distributes these to whom, and at what

what Season he will: And who can say unto him, What dost thou? We should not therefore conclude, that such or such have nothing of this Life; because we see not always these manifest Evidences and Effects of it, in a Time of Trial, which would prove not only Life, but Life in its Vigour and full Strength: The failings and faintings of good Christians, and of such, who sometimes were bold as Lions, as not knowing what it was to fear the Face of Man, should make all, who stand, take heed lest they fall; and see where the Stock of Life, Strength and Courage lieth; and that it is not in themselves, but in the Lord; and that if he do not send Influences to revive, and corroborate, even a Sampson will become weak, as another Man; And that therefore all Flesh should fear, and live by Faith and Dependence upon the Lord, in a Time of Trial, and not rest upon former Experiences of Strength and Throw-bearing; as if that could not fail, seeing the Days Trial must have the Days Influences fitting for it; and what was given for Yesterdays Exercise, will not suffice for the Day's Work.

Again, the Consideration of this, that there is a Life for the People of God, in a Time of sad and sharp Troubles, should upon the one Hand cause Enemies and Persecutors trouble, and molest his People at Leisure; seeing they will not by all their Cruelty and Rage, be able to gain their Point: When they are hunting, harassing, killing and murthering the Saints of God, they think they are undoing them; and yet when they are doing their worst, the Saints are living: Death it self cannot take away this Life. Nothing can separate them from the Love of Christ; neither Tribulation, nor Distress, nor Persecution, nor Famine, nor Nakedness, nor Peril, nor Sword, nay, in all these Things, they are more then Conquerours, through him that loved them. And they may be persuaded, that neither Death nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor Things present, nor Things to come, nor Height, nor Depth, nor

any other Creature shall be able to separate them from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus their Lord, Rom. 8. 35, 37, 38, 39. And upon the other Hand, it should make the People of God shake off all base Fear: Why should they be afraid of Trouble, when there is a Life, and that a noble and excellent Life to be had in Trouble? When their Life shall be preserved may they not be stout? When their Stock of Life is ensured, what should make them fear? Persons that are hardened by unlawful Means, and are Proof against Shot or Sword, can take Courage to themselves in the midst of Danger: And may not they who have God's Proof, be much more courageous?

Yet it must be confessed, that too often the Lord's own People look not like such a Life in a Day of Trial; but rather as Persons, without Health, Heart or Strength; which many Ways appeareth.

1. By shunning to give a faithful, full and reasonable Testimony, for the Lord and his oppressed Truth; because of apparent Hazard, we may come into by that Means, which upon the Matter is a plain denying of him before Men: Now sure, where this Life is in any Measure of Activity, such a Relinquishment of known Duty would not be. There was little of this Life apparent in the Disciples, when they left their Master alone, and fled away, and would not stand by him, and witness a good Confession for him; nor in those Christians who forsook Paul, 2 Tim. 4. 16.

2. By taking such Ways and Courses, to ward off Blow, and to save the Skin, as are but the Result of Consultations had with Flesh and Blood, and as favour of the Flesh; and such as themselves, at other Times, would judge such, and could not but acknowledge to be such. Peter neither before, nor after, could have approved his denying of the Lord Jesus, howbeit in the mean Time he judgeth it a prudential Way to save himself from manifest Hazard.

3. By too ready listening to Offers or Overtures that promise Freedom from the feared Trouble, and carry not in their Front a manifest betraying of the Cause, or renouncing of Christ's Truth in Whole, or in Part; when yet the Zeal of the Lord, and this Life in Activity, would easily discover a close Connexion, betwixt hearkening to such Overtures, and a quiting of the Cause. The primitive Christians saw a Connexion, betwixt the delivering of a Piece of torn Paper, or of any Book, to save themselves from the Fire, and the open renouncing of Christianity; for they had this Life in its Strength; and according to the Measure of this Life, there is a proportionable Measure of the Sharp-sightedness, and holy Sagacity, discovering Secrets, that such, as want it, or that Measure of it, cannot see, nor understand.

4. By more consulting and deliberating how we may keep up a Name and Reputation of making no Defection, and withall, how we may keep our selves out of the Reach of Trouble, than how we shall be most valiant for the Truth, and appear most in its Defence, and for the setting forward the same. If Peter's Thoughts had been more busied about the Propagation of the Gospel-truth, he had not fallen upon that dissimulating Course, for which he was rebuked of Paul, Gal. 2. It is no Evidence of true Valour, to act no more against the Enemy, than may keep from being questioned by a Council of War.

5. By more earnest and assiduous Thoughts of Mind, and serious Study, how to put a Face and Colour upon any Course, that promiseth something of Immunity from Trouble; and how to find out Grounds, whereupon to warrant and plead for such a Practice, and probable Reasons, that may seem to Plead for it *bis & non;* than how to advance and set forward the Truth of God, according to our Place and Power; though it be a manifest and undeniable Duty: Or than how to glorifie God, and confirm his

his Truth by our taking Shame to our selves, in acknowledging our Weakness. We see this in good Aaron, when he was seeking to palliate and extenuate his Sin of making the golden Calf, *Exod. 32. Verses 22, 23, 24.*

6. By a fainting and falling from former Zeal, Courage, Boldness and Plainness in witnessing for the Lord and his Truth, and in vindicating the same; and that because of the Continuance of the Trial, and the lesser and lesser Appearance that there is of the Lord's sending outward Prosperity to Zion. When Iniquity aboundeth through the long Prosperity of the wicked, the Love of many waxeth cold, and a Decay in Love and Zeal argueth a Decay in this Life.

7. By too apparent, and too much influencing Despairedness of Mind, Discouragement of Spirit and Heartlesness; as if, in a Manner, all were gone, and all Hope cut off, which jumbleth and perplexeth the Soul, darkneth the Mind, and unbingeth for Duty, when seen and discovered. Hereby it is, that wise Men have their Wits a seeking in a Day of Darkness and Difficulties; and that Men of might cannot find their Hands: Whereas, where this Life is in its Vigour, as Duty is clear, so Resolution to follow it is strong, and inexpugnable, and the feeble become as David.

8. By unnecessary, yea and hurtful dwelling upon the Thoughts of Trouble before us; and forecasting in our Mind, supposing and imagining wonderful Difficulties; and hereby creating Fears, and distempering Apprehensions, which have no other Tendency, but to faint us in the Way, and discourage us from going about Duty, because of Lions supposed in the Way: Whereas this Life, in due Strength and Vigour, would divert the Mind, from such Thoughts and Apprehensions, and cause the Thoughts run into another Channel, and present other animating, strengthening and encouraging Considerations, and such as would bear down the Cry of all such supposed Bugbears, and dry up a very Flood of these Zeal.

Zeal-cooling and Soul-weakning Apprehensions. When *Paul* had the Call of God to preach his Son among the Heathen, immediately (without any Deliberation or Demur) he conferred not with Flesh and Blood, *Gal. 1. Verses 15, 16.*

6. By following more the Practice, and hearkning more to, and resting more upon the *Counsels* of some Men of Name and Reputation, for Piety and Wit, than the Practices of the registered Examples in Scripture, set forth to incite us unto an Imitation, and the *Counsels* of the Spirit of the Lord, proposed for our Rule : There is no doubt, such an evil Symptom of Decay of this Life; and its Effects are dangerous; the Ground nowise being sure, upon the Account that Man, even the best of Men, are but fallible, and see but in Part; and God hereby being provoked in Righteousness and holy Justice, to darken the Eyes of our Guide, may teach us by sad Experience to find our Folly, in forsaking the only sure Guide. We see in the forecited Place, *Gal. 1. and 2.* how tender and careful *Paul* was in this Matter, lest it should have been thought, that he had done nothing but by the Advice of, and as depending upon, or as commissioned by the other Apostles; and so had no immediate Warrant for what he did, as he said he had, he would not at first go near to *Jerusalem*, where the Apostles were; and when after three Years he has Occasion to be there, he saw none of them but *Peter* and *James*. And again fourteen Years thereafter, he went again to *Jerusalem*, but not upon their Call, but by Revelation as he saith, *Gal. 2. 2.* and he communicated to some of the Chief of them, the *Gospel* which he preached, as not being ashamed thereof; not that he might have their Approbation, and so their Warrant; for, *Verse 6.* he saith, those that seemed to be somewhat, in Conference added nothing to him, only they gave to him and *Barnabas* the right Hand of Fellowship, and looked upon them as faithful Brethren. And when he communicated the Mat-

ter unto them, it was but privately, left by any Means he should have run, and had run in vain : He would do nothing, no not in a Circumstance, that might say, He did depend upon them, and walked not upon the Warrant of his Commission he received from his Master, but would in Time coming walk by their Example and Directions, more than by the Command of Christ ; and thus give Ground to question all that he had done formerly as an Apostle.

10. By a too great Readiness to accept of small Favours with Thankfulness, when it is attended with outward Ease and Quiet, though it be in Matters, that are none of ours, but the proper Interest of our Lord and Master; in avowing of which with constancy, we are exposed to continual Difficulties and Dangers : This sure, argueth a Decay of Zeal for Christ, and his Interests, when we are called to buy the Truth at any Rate, but at no Rate to sell it ; and what is given away by Compact, is not so recoverable by Law, as what is robbed or taken from us without our Consent; and it is undeniable, that we may not so much as give a tacit Consent unto the detaining of any Thing that is our Lord's: *Moses* knew this, when he would not consent to leave one Hoof behind him, though thereby he might have delivered six hundred thousand Persons and moe, out of manifest Slavery, both as to Soul and Body, out of which they were groaning to be delivered, and expecting a Delivery with many a Disappointment. Some might possibly have thought, That *Moses* might more have respected the Liberty of his Country-men, than to have stood upon such a *Punctilio*: But he was of another Spirit, and would not yield even so far, whatever should follow.

11. By an Unwillingness to understand what is the Duty of the Day ; because of seen or apparent Dangers to follow the conscientious Practice thereof, shunning Means of Information, or of Conviction. This, sure, is an evident Demonstration of a Decay in this Life of God, when Persons are willingly ignorant

norant (as Peter speaketh of some, in Reference to a Point of Faith) of what they should know, and of what they should by all Means study to know, that they may approve themselves faithful in the Day of Trial. And this may come to that Height, that they dare not seek Light in that Matter from God, lest it occasion a Torment within. Is not this in Effect, to say, (with those mentioned, Job 21. Verse 14.) Unto God, depart from us; for we desire not the Knowledge of thy Ways? And could it be thus with such, in whom this Life were in any Measure lively, if they were not under a great Decay, or in a Swoon?

12. By being affrighted, sadned, discontented, and inwardly grieved at any Course begun, or taken, or carried on, that apparently will occasion or bring on Trouble and Persecution; though it be manifest and undeniable, that the Course fallen upon be a necessary and suitable Duty of the Day; and that Faithfulness to Christ, and his Truth calleth for it at the Hands of all, who would appear before him in Peace. Where this Life not under a Decay, the Zeal of the Lord's House would so eat them up, that every Motion made, and every Course set on Foot, how hazardous so ever, would be the rejoicing of their Heart; and they would hide their Eyes from all Danger that might follow thereupon.

13. By refusing to follow necessary Duties in such a Day; because they are few, that will concur with them therein, or approve them in it; or because some eminent Men judge it not prudent, or safe; and by being inwardly glad, that such a Motion was discountenanced, & such a Course was judged by others not fit, meerly because they saw, that thereby they would be freed from Trouble, that otherwise could not be evited; while as, if this Life were in Vigour, such a Disappointment would be as a Sword in their Bones, and they though left alone, would follow the clear Duty, whatever Risk they might run, upon the Account thereof: Faithful Athanasius feared not to stand alone,

lone, though all the great Men, wise Men, and learned Men were against him, and condemning him.

Other Things of this Nature might be mentioned, beside such Courses, as carry in their Forehead a manifest and undeniable Compliance with the Courses and Designs of Enemies and a palpable shifting of the Cross of Christ: But these may serve for an Hint, and may give Ground for searching after and finding out others, to our Conviction and Humiliation.

As for the sinful Causes and Means of this evil Distemper, (if any enquire after them) they are so obvious and notorious, that much needeth not be spoken thereupon. We may reduce them to these few Heads.

1. A Decay of Zeal for and Love to the Lord, and his precious Interest: When Persons fall from their first Love, the Love of their Espousals, all other Duties, that must be principled, and enlivened with this Love, decay accordingly; especially such Duties as are more difficult, and are attended with Hazard, and therefore would call for a more than ordinary Measure of Zeal, to carry them forward. The Want of this made the Church of *Lassicea* coldrife and lukewarm in all her Performances: And therefore it is prescribed as a Remedy, *be zealous therefore and repent, Revel. 3. Verse 19.* If *Phinehas* had not been zealous for his God, *Num. 25: Verses 11, 13.* he had never attempted that hazardous and difficult Inter-prize of his alone.

2. A Decay of the necessary Duty of Mortification, and of dying, as crucified to the World, and having the World crucified to us. The World, and its Pleasure, Ease, Respect, Honour, Commodities, Delights and Enticements, is a great Enemy to all good Works, and all good Frames, and especially to a Reconciliation with the Cross of Christ's Love to the Flesh, and to Ease, as it prevaleth, Love to God and to all Good decayeth. *Love not the World, neither the Thing*

Things that are in the World ; if any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him, 1 John 2. Verse 15. And either this World must be overcome by Faith, or it will overcome us. We know what it did to *Demas*, 2 Tim. 4. 10. The Faith of that Word, Job. 12. 25. Mat. 10. 39; *He that loveth his Life shall lose it, and he that hateth his Life in this World, shall keep it unto eternal Life*, would make all the Fair of this World melt off.

3. A Decay in Faith cannot but cause this Decay : When there is not that lively Faith in God, of the Promises of Christ's being crowned King, of the Unchangeableness of the Decrees and Purposes of God, of the rich Recompence of Reward, that is prepared for Overcomers, &c. It cannot otherwise be, but this Life, which is maintained and nourished by Faith, must decay.

4. To these we may add a Suffering of the Impression of the Truth, and Dreadfulness of the Threatnings; of the Greatness of the Evil of falling away from approved Principles and Practices ; of the Hazard of declining in the least, in a Day of Trial ; and of the great Dishonour done to the Lord thereby, to wear off: For when the Impression of these Things wear eth away, the Fear of God departeth ; and when we are not in the Fear of God all the Day, this Life must necessarily decay.

The Consideration whereof should move all to guard against these Evils, in a Day of Trial and Persecution ; and to study with all Earnestness the contrary Duties, that the Evils mentioned, and all others having Reference therunto, and depending thereupon, may be kepted off ; and we kepted in Case to glorifie the Lord, in our Places and Callings, whatever Dispensation of Providence we meet with.

C H A P. IV.

The Just only are they, who shall live this Life, in a Time of Trouble and Trial.

I followeth in the next Place, that we speak a Word of the Persons here designed, as the only or distinctive Subjects of this Privilege and Advantage of Life, in such an Evil Time; as was formerly pointed forth. The Privilege of Life, in such a Time of Death and Distress, is no mean Privilege: And here we see, it is not a common Thing, but peculiar to the just Ones; *for the just shall live by it.*

Now the Question may be, Who are these just ones? To which we may shortly answer thus: That through the whole Scripture, the truly Godly are us called, and they only go under this Denomination. Yet for further Satisfaction, we shall explain this Matter both *negatively* and *positively*.

And, First, By *just* Ones here, we must not understand,

1. Such as are only such in their own Eyes, and judge themselves just and righteous Persons, having true or scriptural Ground to found their Apprehensions upon: Such are those just Persons spoken of, ¹⁵⁷ who have no need of Repentance, blind-presumptuous Souls, that dream their Condition Good, and they need not change their Way; and continue, and at length perish, see Mat. 9. 13.

2. Nor such, who are just in the Eyes, and in the Account of the World, being civilly or morally just in their outward Carriage with Man, just in their Dealings

Dealings and Bargains, having just Weights, and just Measures, and dealing justly, without defrauding, or oppressing any : For even Heathens may attain to this ; and so be just in this Sense : And such may be understood, Ezek. 3. 20. and 18. 26.

3. Nor yet such as have, as to Outwards, a religious Justness in their Way and Walk ; as the Pharisee who outwardly appeared righteous, Mat. 23. Verse 28. Every one, who hath a fair outward Shew of Religion, is not the just Man that is here meant.

4. Nor upon the other Hand, must we understand hereby one, that is just and righteous, so as he can be charged with no Sin, or Miscarriage ; for we know none such living, whatever some blind and vain fantastick Persons pretend unto, 1 Kings 8. Verse 46. Prov. 20. Verse 9. and 24. Verse 16. Eccles. 7. 20. Job. 1. 8. for even the just Man here understood may fall seven Times a Day.

5. Nor must we understand here only him who hath attained to a full Assurance of Faith, of Hope, and of Understanding, Heb. 10. Verse 22. and 6. Verse 11. Col. 2. Verse 2. seeing many who have not come this Length, may be and are helped to this Life by Faith.

6. Nor yet must we understand only such as have attained unto an high Degree, and Measure of Grace and Holiness, and are become old Men in Christianity, and strong and well rooted in Grace : For though these have a great Advantage in an evil Day of others, who are but young Beginners ; yet it is sometimes found, That young Beginners prove more steadfast than some of those, who have been of a long standing.

7. Nor must we understand here only such as are great Christians, wise and prudent, having a great Measure of Light and Knowledge, in the Matter of God, so as they can dispute and debate for the Truth and confound Adversaries with the Power of Reason : For though such have a great Advantage

them, who are weak, and more ready to be drawn away with every Wind of Doctrine, and less able to foresee and discern the Wiles of the Devil, and the crooked Serpentine Insinuations of Men of corrupt Minds; yet others, who cannot dispute for Christ, may be helped to burn for him.

8. Nor must we restrict this Privilege only to those who are righteous Persons, of great spiritual Attainments, in Experiences, and Confirmations of Truth; and who have had much of the comforting, confirming, strengthening and corroborating Influences of the holy Ghost, and have drunk deep of the spiritual Joys of the holy Ghost. These, I grant, have a very great Advantage; yet others, who have tasted little of all these great Things, may get Grace to live in a Time of deepest Distress, and may be carried thorow much Tribulation, to the Honour of the strong Captain of their Salvation.

But (to clear the Matter *Affirmatively*) the just Man here meant, is one, who,

1. Is made just by the imputed Righteousness of Jesus Christ, and declared to be and accepted as such by the Lord, who justifieth the ungodly, through that Cautionary Righteousness of the Mediator, received and rested upon by Faith: So that hereby is meant the Person, who hath in the Conviction of Sin and Misery, and of an Impossibility to get Relief any other way, fled to Christ for Refuge, revealed and held forth in the Gospel; and hath cast the whole Weight and Burden of his Soul upon Christ, as the chosen One, upon whom Help is laid. So that the just Man here is the Believer, who is now united to Christ, and through him, is reconciled to God; and justified Person, who is in a State of Favour with God through Jesus Christ, the only Peacemaker: And thus chiefly he is just.

2. One, who having thus closed with the Way of God, in Christ, is walking therein, through the strength of Jesus, with all Singleness and Uprightness

of Heart, having Respect to all the Commandments of God; and so having a Principle of Grace in Righteousness within, even the Spirit of Grace walking according to that Principle, without Hypocrisie, and Dissimulation; and this is perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God, running with his daily failings and Infirmities, to the Fountain opened to the House of David, and to the Inhabitants of Jerusalem. The just Man is thus an upright Man, *Isai. 26.* and a perfect Man walking with God, as is said Noah, *Gen. 6. Verse 9.* A good Man, and a just Man together, *Luke 23. 50.* so a just Man is one that feareth God, *Act. 18. 22.*

So that in short, the just Man is one that is reconciled to God, through Jesus Christ; and so opposed to all, that are Enemies to God, and living as Enemies to him, and to all his Interests and Concerns; and one that is, with Truth and Singleness of Heart, doing just to all, giving God his Due, and not robbing God to please Men, nor ascribing Men by Flattery what is not their Due, nor taking from them what justly belongeth to them, by Fraud or Falshood: And thus they are such, as exercise themselves to have always a Conscience, void of Offence toward God, and toward Men, *Act. 24. 15.* and are working Righteousness, as their Trade and Occupation, *1 John 3. Verse 7.* and walking in Integrity, *Prov. 20. 7.*

These are they whom the Scripture accounteth just and righteous Ones; howbeit, they have not great Gifts, much Experience, much feeling of Joy in the holy Ghost, much Victory over Sin, but are failing through Infirmitie, seven Times; nor clear Light touching their Faith and State, but are troubled with Darkness, Doubtings, and many Temptations: And they are thus stiled just, or righteous, upon a doubtful Account: First, Upon the Account of the Sure righteousness of Christ imputed to them, whereupon they become justified before God, and have all the Iniquit-

iniquities pardoned. Next, Upon the Account of their being made Partakers of the Divine Nature, principling them to Works of Obedience to God, in all Points: Whereby they being Friends to God, are devoted to him, and lay forth themselves for the Glory of God, for the exalting of Christ in all his Offices, and for the Advancement of his Kingdom, in themselves in others, and in the whole World, according to their Power.

Now it is these and these only, who have right to and can expect this Privilege of Life, in Times of great Affliction, Temptation, and Persecution; and that for these Reasons.

1. These only have this Life of God begun in them, which will and must be perfected; and all Dispensations, that intervene, must promote and carry on his Life. The Path of the Just is as the shining Light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect Day,

Prov. 4. 18.
2. Unto these alone do Promises belong, whether of Blessings in General, Ps. 3. Verse last, Prov. 10. 6. or of Ourgate and Deliverance out of Trouble, Prov. 13. —— But the just shall come out of Trouble. See also Proverbs 18. 9. The righteous is delivered out of trouble Psal. 34. 19. Many are the Afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. See Ps. 10. and many other Places: Or of Support under trouble, Psal. 37. Verse 17. —— The Lord upholderth the righteous, Psal. 55 Verse 22 —— He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved: Or of Preservation from the evil of it Prov. 12. 21. There shall no Evil happen to the upright. In a Time of Trouble he will hide such, Psal. 13. 5. Or of Strength in Trouble, Psal. 46 Verse 1. It is a present help in Time of Trouble, Psal. 37. Verse 39: it is their Strength in Time of Trouble, Or of his Presence with them, Psal. 91. Verse 15. I will be with him in trouble.

3. It is to them only, that all Things work together for good, Romans 8. Verse 29. for they are Lovers of

God, and called according to his Purpose.

4. It is they, and they only, that exercise Faith, by which this Life is nourished and promoted. Other neither can, nor will believe ; and therefore cannot live this Life through Faith, as we shall shew afterward.

5. Only they have a Right through Christ to all these good Things, formerly mentioned, that are Ingredients in this Life, and contribute to make it up ; as Peace, Joy, Hope, Access unto God, Patience, &c.

6. They only can make a special and spiritual Improvement of the Grounds of this Life, and Means contributing to it : and that to this End, that they may enjoy this Life, in such an evil Time, As shall be more especially shewn hereafter.

From which we see, 1. What is one main Cause, that so many fall off from Christ in a Day of Trial, many of those, who in a Day of Prosperity seemed godly lively Christians, do discover themselves to be dead and rotten, in a Day of Adversity : Even because they were never really among the just Ones, whatever outward Appearance and Profession there was. I do not mean, that none will faint and fall aside in Trial, who have the Root of the Matter within them, or that all such, as do faint in a Day of Storm, and do not ride it out courageously, are to be looked upon as Persons void of the Grace of God ; for I know, that many such may discover much Weakness, and their Life may come under a sad Decay ; but yet if Grace will recover them to their Feet at length. But as the Want of the due Exercise of Grace in those who have Grace, may be and is the Cause of the yielding to the Temptation, and fainting in the Days of Adversity ; so the Want of the Grace of God in Reality is a certain Cause of the falling off of many who seemed eminent Professours in a Day of Peace. These are of them, that draw back unto Perdition Heb. 10. 39. Because they have not believed to the saving of the Soul. Hence this is one Cause of the

Lord's sending, searching and winnowing Times, that
the Chaff may be discovered from the Wheat. Such
Times are trying Times. Christ taught us this in
the Parable of the Seed, Mat. 13. Some receive the
Word, as Stony Places, that is, hear the Word, and
with Joy receive it, yet have not Root in them-
selves, but endure for a while; for when Tribulation
Persecution ariseth because of the Word, by and
they are offended, Verses 20, 21. The Hour of Temptation cometh to try them, that dwell upon the Earth,
v. 3. 10. and when that Hour cometh, Doves depart
from Christ, and his Truth, and turn with the Times.
Any, when there is no Storm blowing in Christ's
face, will follow him, for Loaves, for a Name, for
gain; and will side with the good Cause, when
thereby Places of Gain or of Credit are to be had,
when the Wind turns, will let Christ stand alone.
is not Name Christians, nor all Professours, that
live by Faith, in a Day of Trial. It is the *just* that
all live by Faith.

Hereby we see a great Difference betwixt the
Just Ones and others. In a fair Day, as to outward
appearance, some may seem to excel and far out-
shew others; and little real Difference will be spied
betwixt such as have the Root of the Matter, and
those as have it not: But yet there is a great Difference,
as great, as betwixt Life and Death. The just
are eth, when others for all their broad Leaves, and
Flourishes are but dead at the Root.

If Persons get Grace to live, and to live by
Truth, in a Day of Adversity, so as they cannot, they
will not think of turning their Back on Christ, let the
Wind blow, as it will; they will not deny him, or
Truth and Interest, whatever befall them; and be-
conscious of their own Weakness, and fearing
themselves, are therefore keeping near the Fountain
Strength, and Life, and begging Supplies of
Grace, that they may be enabled to stand in the evil
and kept from giving a wrong Touch unto

the Ark of God, and from wronging his Cause and Interest, let follow what will ; such Persons, I say may have all their Doubts, and Scruples loosed, as to their State. It is the just that live by Faith in an evil Day : And if they be living by Faith in an evil Day, why may they not, why should they not conclude that they are just, and among the justified Ones ?

4. If any would be keepeed right in an evil Day and would fain ride out the Storm, let them first flee to Jesus by Faith, and get their Souls anchored on him, who is the Rock of Ages ; and when, through Faith in him, they are made just, through the imputed Righteousness of Christ, and are accepted and justified through him, they may then have good Ground of Hope, that they shall be keepeed standing when many shall fall on the right Hand, and on the left.

5. There is not much to be expected of such, in a Day of Persecution, and Trial for the Word of Truth, as have not closed with Christ in Truth, according to the Gospel, for all their great Past Professions, and Engagements. Where Life is not the Root, Leaves will soon fall off, when the Wind blows hard and sharp : It is the *Just that live by Faith*.

6. Such as have closed a Covenant with Christ, and have put on the Lord Jesus by Faith ; and are hence justified and sanctified through him, need not be anxiously fearful or sollicitous about their ebbing and flowing in a Day of Trial. *The Just live by Faith*, they will have a Life of it, go Matters as they will : If they Mind their Duty and walk in holy Fear, and keep near their Head, he will have a Care of them. The Apprehension then of approaching Trials should not dis temper them, nor cause them sink in Discouragement as if there were no Hope ; nor conclude that they shall fall by the Way, and not be carried thorough the Sea of Trial, that is before them. Here is Ground for such to lay aside these dis tempering, unkinging and discouraging Thoughts, and to lay the Matter on the Lord by Faith, and commit unto him, as he

a Faithful Creator, the keeping of their Souls, in
such an evil Time: Yet withall, they would beware
carnal Confidence, or of Security, and of Neglect
the Exercise of Humility, Godly Fear, and De-
pendence upon the Lord.

7. It should be no astonishing Thing to see so many
fall away, in a trying Time, notwithstanding of for-
mer simple Professions, strict Obligations, Perempto-
ry Engagements, resolute Promises, Purposes, Vows
and Oaths, to stand fast, and abide by the Truth :
for it is the *Just* that *live by Faith*; and many may
come under ourward Obligations Covenants, Vows
and Engagements to adhere to Christ and to his In-
terest; and yet be Strangers to justifying Grace;
many may be outwardly called, and give as outward
ear unto the Call, who yet may be none of the
holier Ones, and who belong not to that Number
that will never be among the Just: And the *Just* only live
by Faith.

8. Many, in the Beginning of a Storm, and of a
Tumult, may seem courageous and steadfast, and do very
many promising Things, upon the Account of a
Name; and plain Shame of the World may cause
some stand out the first Blast; and yet be Strangers
to this Life; Because never reconciled unto God,
through Christ, so that all these Motions and stirrings,
whatever they appeared to be, were no Acts of Life,
of such as were just; which the Continuance or
growth of the Storm will soon discover to have been
but lifeless Fairies, and natural Motions; for it is the
Just that *live by Faith*.

C H A P. V.

This throwes bearing Life, in an evil Time, is only by Faith.

THe last Thing that is Considerable, in these Words, is the Means whereby this Life is had; and that is Faith: *The Just shall live by Faith.* It is only then by Faith, in Exercise, that the Godly (formerly described) win to that Life, (which we have explained) in such an evil Time, (as was formerly declared.)

For explaining of this, and for making Way to what followeth to be spoken to, we must speak a little to these Things, 1. Concerning the Nature of this Faith. 2. Concerning its Operations and Actings, in Order to attaining of a Life, in an evil Day. 3. To the Grounds of this Truth, *that the Just live by Faith.* And these being cleared, in some Measure, the Inferences therefrom, and particularly the Usefulness and Necessity of the constant Exercise of Faith, will be plain and obvious.

As to the First, The Nature of this Faith. We would not mistake here, and take every Thing for Faith, that we may by a Mistake conceive to be it: And therefore to speak to this, in the first Place, negatively, we would know,

1. That this Faith is not a groundless Presumption or a Confidence, that some have, whereby they conclude, that all will go well with them, and they need not fear: And therefore turn careless and secure, and forget the Necessity that there is for them, to stand upon their Watch-tower, and to walk circumspectly.

2. Nor is this Faith any natural Confidence, and Assurance, that they will be carried thorow, and shall never depart from the Truth, be their Hazard what

t will; possibly founded upon this, that they think the Storm will not last long, or that they have endured as great Blasts before.

3. Nor is it any carnal Courage and Stoutness of Heart, whereby they think to double out the Trial; which may arise from meer Pride, and be principled by meer Shame, or such like outward Respects.

4. Nor is it any stoical Insensibility, nor Unconcernedness and Unaffectedness, with what occurreth, Faith is a most sensible Thing, and bringeth not on Lethargy on the Soul, nor doth it contract a Callum, or Scurf of Hardness or Indifference in these Matters.

5. Nor is it the Gift of Understanding, or an historical Faith, receiving by the Light of the Understanding, the Truths of God revealed in his Word; or a rational Conviction of the Truth, grounded on manifest Evidences and Promises, to the Satisfaction of the rational Intellect.

6. Nor yet is it any rare, but unsanctified, Communication of Pleasure, Sweetness, Tickling, Joy, or Delation in the Truth received, which will sometimes accompany the intellectual Embracing of the Truth, like that mentioned, *Heb. 6. 4, 5.*

But on the other Hand (that we may shew more positively, what it is) we would take notice of these Particulars.

1. That it is a spiritual saving Grace, wrought only by the Spirit of God, importing a Renovation and Change of the whole Frame of the Soul; and Work far beyond the Power of Nature: For it is the pure Gift of God, through Jesus Christ, *Ephes. 2. Phil. 1. 29.*

2. That it is such a Grace, as carrieth the Soul out of it self, for all Supplies, to seek them and find them elsewhere: A Grace that will not suffer the Soul to build on any Thing within it self, how specious and promising-like soever; for it is a Self-denying Grace; and causeth the Soul despair in it self, and renounce all Hope and Expectation of Help,

Strength and throw-bearing in and from it self.

3. It is such a Grace, as, though it will not suffer any, in whom it is, to despise the Means appointed of God, or to lay them aside; for it is an Enemy unto Presumption; so, as to its expected Help and Relief, it looketh and airteth the Soul to look beyond all those Means and Instruments. For,

4. As it carrieth the Soul unto God through Jesus, and uniteth the Soul to Christ, and to God through Christ, and keepeth the Soul in Christ; so it airteth the Soul towards Christ, and prompteth and principleth it unto a Dependence solely upon him, for all that is necessary, for carrying thorow in an evil Time,

5. Though the Man sometimes, through Darkness dare not confidently, and explicitly own the Lord, as his God, and Christ as his Redeemer, nor the Promises as his Allowance; yet this Grace inclineth, naturally and kindly, the Soul God-ward and Christ-ward, and keepeth the Soul hanging upon the Lord, and expecting Supplies from that airth alone, and causeth the Soul look toward the Promises, as flowing from free Grace, and as the conduit Pipes through which come the help, Relief and Strength: That is called for, and all these good Things, which are purchased by Christ.

6. By this Grace, as the Man is made to see his own Emptiness and Necessity, and therefore to see how necessary it is that he have continual Supplies of Influences, for carrying of him thorow; so it principleth the Soul to an hanging upon God, in Christ, and to a looking to the Promises, as yea, and amen, in Christ, and to wait upon the Lord in that Posture, with the Mouth at the Promise of God, who cannot lie, sucking as it were at this Breast, and drawing the continual Supplies requisite for his Relief, and Help.

This Motion and Working of Soul may be, where there is little or no Confidence or Boldness to assert an Interest in God, as theirs; little or no Perswasion of the Sincerity of their Faith; little or no challenging of

the Promises as theirs: But on the contrary, there may be much Fear and Trembling, much Doubting and Darkness; yet there will be such a Warmness of soul towards Christ and all his Interests; and such Loathing to do any Thing, that may be but interpretatively a wronging of Christ, and his Cause, as will kindle earnest Desires to be kept true and honest to him; and press them to seek the Presence of the Lord, and the Help of his Grace; and to look to him, according to his Word, with a Resolution, through his assisting Grace, never to deny him, or flinch from the Truth, let their Trouble and Persecution upon the Account of that, be never so hot.

Secondly, That we may understand more of the Way of a Believer's living by Faith, in a Time of tribulation, we shall shew something of its Actions, in Reference to such a Time; first in general, and then more particularly.

In general, Paul tells us, That Faith is the Substance of Things hoped for, and the Evidence of Things not seen, Heb. 11. 1. It giveth to the Soul, as it were, an antidated Possession of the Things promised, realizing them, and giving them a Subsistence and Being, by the fast Ground that it layeth hold on, whereby the Soul may have, and hath according to the Measure of this Operation, a firm Confidence of the Matter. The Syriack Version doth thus finely paraphrase the Words, *Faith is the Certainty of those Things, which are in Hope, as if now they did actually exist.* And this it eff. Quia eth by these Acts.

1. Faith taketh up God aright, and hath right Apprehensions of his Nature and Properties; seeth him to be true, and faithful; One that cannot lie, Tit. 1. 2. Heb. 6. 18. He will not be unto his a Liar, and as Waters that fail, Jer. 15. 18. Faith setteth him true and faithful, and that his Words are tried Words, Ps. 12. 6. and 18. 30. And seeth him also to be Constant and Unchangeable, in his Purposes, Decrees, Resolutions.

ons and Promises; for there is no Variableness, nor Shadow of turning with him, *James 1. 17.*

2. As Faith considereth the Fountain Spring, the Well Head of all the Promises to be free Grace, and undeserved Love which is infinite, eternal and unchangeable, and consequently can not grow less, wear away, decay or wax weak; so it looketh upon all the good Things promised, as now ratified and confirmed by the Blood of the Covenant; and consequently, as Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus, *2 Cor. 1. 20.*

3. Faith runneth back; that it may get a sure footing Place, unto the Covenant of Redemption, made betwixt *Jehovah*, and the Son of God, the Mediator and Cautioner; and there seeth all the Promises made principally to Christ, as Head of the chosen, or as belonging to, and comprehended under these Articles of Agreement, or of the Covenant of Peace, that was betwixt them both; and so made to Believers, as in Christ: Yea Faith eyeth both Parties, Covenanters in that Bargain, as engaged to other, in Point of Honour and Faithfulness, in the Behalf of the weak Followers of Christ, securing their thorowbearing and certain Salvation, in all the Steps thereof, so far as shall tend to God's Glory and their Good. David's Faith got a sure Grip of this Covenant, *Psal. 89*, and therefore he beginneth that Song, saying, *I will sing of the Mercies of the Lord for ever: with my Mouth will I make known thy Faithfulness to all Generations*, for I have said, *Mercy shall be built up for ever; thy Faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very Heavens.*

4. Faith eyeth the Almighty Power of *Jehovah*, against which there is no standing, as engaged to make out what he hath said, and to bring about what he hath purposed and promised; and this rendereth all difficulties light, and inconsiderable. Abraham did not consider his own Body now dead, when he was about a hundred Years old. Neither yet the deadness of Sarah's Womb: Why? because he was fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform, *Rom. 4. 19.*

1. This also did his Faith fix on, when he was tried, to offer up Isaac, his only, begotten Son, of whom it is said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called; for he accounted, that God was able to raise him up, even from the Dead, Heb. 11. 17, 18, 19.

5. Faith seeth the Hand of Christ ordering all and every one of the particular Circumstances of the Trial, that the poor Believer is under, and is exercised with: It seeth all Power in Heaven and Earth given unto him, and all Judgment committed unto him, and the Management of all Affairs concerning the Church, and every particular Member of his mystical Body: And therefore seeth Wise and Faithful, and tender hearted Jesus measuring out the Exercise in all its Degrees, and ordering all its Ingredients; and fixeth on that as a firm Truth, God is Faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; - but will with the Temptation also make a Way to escape that ye may be able to bear it, 1 Cor. 10. 13.

6. Faith carrieth all the Difficulties, Fears, Doubts, Temptations, which the Man is under, or apprehended to come to, and rolleth all upon the Lord Christ, that he may bear them; and so cause them to bear them, or stand under them: And thus it doth also with all Duties; because Faith walketh upon this Ground, that God must work in them both to will and to do, of his own good Pleasure, Phil. 2. 13. and that it is he that worketh all their Works in them, Isai. 26. 18. or to them as it were, to their Hand: And thus the Believer liveth and suffereth in Christ.

But for further clearing of this, there are some special actings of Faith, in a Time of Perplexity and Trial; which will help us to see, how by Faith, there is a Life to be had in Time of saddest Trouble: We cannot reckon up all these; a few Instances will suffice for Illustration.

1. When Sin staseth the poor suffering Believers in the Face, whether National Sins, or Personal Sins; and the Conviction of this is like to dash all their Hopes,

Hopes, and utterly to deject and cast them down; Faith can help at this sad Juncture, by taking up and looking to the Lord, as one that pardoneth Iniquity for his own Names Sake, according to that, *Is. 43. 25.* *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy Transgressions, for mine own Sake, and will not remember thy Sins.* Faith looketh upon him, as one that is Merciful, and will not keep Anger for ever; if we will but acknowledge our Iniquity. *Jer. 3. 12, 13.* and seeth him to be Merciful and Gracious, slow to Anger, and plenteous in Mercy, who will not always chide, neither keep his Anger for ever, *Psal. 103. 8, 9.* Moses knew well how to make use of this Shield, when the Lord had threatened, because of their murmuring, to disinherit them, when he said, *Num. 14. 17, 18, 19.* *And now I beseech thee, let the Power of my Lord be great according as thou hast spoken, saying, The Lord is Long-suffering and of great Mercy, forgiving Iniquity and Transgression — Pardon, I beseech thee, the Iniquity of this People, according unto the greatness of thy Mercy; and as thou hast forgiven this People from Egypt, even until now.* Former Pardons abused did not discourage him, or stop his Mouth; nay, even that was an Argument to Faith, because the Mercy of God was great, and could not be exhausted. So doth the Church in *Micah 7. 18.* by Faith take up God, as a non such Pardoner, and as one that delighteth in Mercy, *who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth Iniquity, and passeth by the Transgressions of the remnant of his Heritage:* He retaineth not his Anger for ever; because he delighteth in Mercy. And hence in the following Verses, draweth Soul-strengthening Conclusions, *He will turn again, he will have Compassion upon us, he will subdue our Iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their Sins into the Depths of the Sea. Thou wilt perform the Truth to Jacob, &c.*

2. When nothing appeareth, that can give any probable Ground of Hope, that the Promise shall be accomplished, yea many Things would seem to say, that there would be no Performance, and that the

Lord

Lord had forgotten his Promises. Even then Faith will not give it over, but taketh a broad Look of that broad Object, the Faithfulness of God ; and discovereth it to be incomparable, incomprehensible, and inconceivably great, *Psal. 89. 8*. O Lord God of Hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee ; or to thy Faithfulness round about thee ? So *Psal. 36. 5, 6.* Thy Mercy, O Lord, is in the Heavens, and thy Faithfulness reacheth unto the Clouds : Thy Righteousness is like the great Mountains, (or like the Mountains of God :) Faith takes him up as a God, that will not suffer his Faithfulness to fail, according as he hath said himself, *Psal. 39. 33.* and crieth out with the Church, in the *Lam. 3. 23.* Great is thy Faithfulness : Faith seeth, that no Vicissitudes, Changes or Alterations, that are through Ages and Generations, do in the least impeach, or weaken his Faithfulness, for it is to all Generations, *Psalm 89. 5. and 119. Verse 90.*

3. When insuperable-like Difficulties stand in the Way of the Accomplishment of the Promises ; Reason cannot reach it, Sense is blind and cannot see, how it can be : Yet Faith will not give it over ; but looketh to God, as one that can do Wonders, *Psal. 77. 14.* and as one to whom nothing is impossible, *Luke 1. 37. and 18. 27.* and doth whatsoever he will, in Heaven and in Earth, *Psal. 135. 6.* We see how Abraham's Faith wrought, *Heb. 11. 19.* Hence the Church can in a Manner, call for Miracles *Izai. 64. 1.* * Oh that thou wouldest rent the Heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the Mountains might flow down at thy Presence, when the melting Fire burneth, the Fire causeth the Waters to boil. Which is as much, as if the Church had said, though there were no other Way for our Delivery, at such an extraordinary and miraculous Way ; yet dare bold to seek it that Way, ere we be not delivered. When there is no Probability of an Outgate from within, but all Things in the Church, or in their own Hearts, are so discouraging like, that they can get nothing to pitch upon, that may give any Encouragement.

ment, or Ground whereupon they can plead with God ; or when all Things are so dark about them, that they know neither, what to think or say : Faith, even in that misty Hour, when it can see nothing round about it, will look up to God, and even draw an Argument from him, who is by his Dispensations, manifesting his Displeasure and Anger against them; and plead from his Name, and his Honour, that is engaged. Thus wrought Faith in Joshua, Chap. 7. 9.

And what wilt thou do unto thy great Name ? The Dispensation was such a Surprize of Judgment, and so circumstantial, that it had a very terrifying Aspect; and when he knew not what to say, but that he saw Ruin approaching them, and that He wished they had never come over Jordan, he pitcheth upon this Argument, the Name of God that was engaged, and could not but suffer, if there were not a Change in his Dispensations. So did Moses, when the Lord had said, He would destroy the people, and make of him a great Nation, Numb. 14: 13: as not regarding that Offer, (an Instance of Self denial, to Astonishment) and as more concerned with the Glory & Name of God that would suffer, and not be repaired by the Lord's making of him a stronger and mightier Nation; he pleadeth with the Lord upon this Account, That if he should destroy all that People, as one Man, the Nations that have heard of the Fame of him would speak, saying, Because the Lord was not able to bring this People into the Land, which he sware unto them ; therefore he hath slain them in the Wilderness : So doth the Church make Use of this same Argument, Psal. 79. 9. Help us O God of our Salvation for the Glory of thy Name, and deliver us, and purge away our Sin for thy Name's Sake. Elsewhere also we find this Argument made Use of: And what wonder, that Faith lay hold on this, seeing upon this very Ground, the Lord hath oft wrought Deliverances for his People, that his Name might not be polluted among the Heathen, as we see, Ezek: 20: 9, 14, 22.

5. When all Things look discouraging like, so the

suc-

uch, as would plead in the Behalf of a Church, agnot know well what to say, or can see nothing in it to give Ground of Hope: Faith can see something, that will be supporting; for it can plead with the Lord, by telling him, what he hath done of old, and call to Mind the Years of ancient Times, and consider the Days of old: the Years of the right Hand of the most High, his Works and Wonders of old, as it is, *Psal. 77. 5, 10, 11.* and this will prove reviving, and lift up the Head, in Hope; thus we see the Church insisting much upon this Theme, and urging this Argument, when she hath little else to say, as *Psal. 10: 8; &c. So Psal. 89: 10: Thou hast broken Rabab in pieces, as one that is slain; thou hast scattered thine Enemies with thy strong Arms,* and *Psal. 74: 13, 14, 15.* and *77: 15: 16, 17, 18.* And though the Consideration of the former great Works of the Lord might prove discouraging, partly because of an unanswerable walking in his People, whereupon those former Mercies might now prove Aggravations of their Guilt; partly also because, the Tempter might hence infer, That God had forsaken, and had given them up, and would no more own them, or appear for them: Yet Faith can hence see the Lord engaged to perfect what he hath begun: For his Works must all be perfect, *Psal. 18: 10.* And to own further his Church, that he hath appeared for and purchased, *Psal. 74: 2. Remember thy Congregation, which thou hast purchased of old; the Rod of thy divine Inheritance, which thou hast redeemed.* Faith will urge, that all God's former Pains and Cost, as it were, must not be in vain; and that Enemies must not have it to say, That God was not able to perfect what he had begun, and therefore changed his Mind; which were highly derogatory unto the Glory of the Lord.

6. When a Soul hath lost Sight of all former Experiences, and spiritual Manifestations, Works and Appearances of the Lord; or through Temptation is snared from making any comfortable Improvement thereof,

thereof, in the present Day of Distress ; Faith can cause some reviving in Hope, by looking to, and improving temporal and common Mercies and Favours : So we find David pleading thus with God, *Psal. 71.*
 6. *Thou art he, that took my out of my Mother's Bowels :* And many such Arguments hath he in the *Psalms :* And we possibly think that there could be little Force in such an Argument, seeing every wicked Wretch could say the same, as well as David. But Faith knoweth how to improve the commonest Mercy, as a special Mercy ; for it looketh on the meanest and commonest of them, as purchased by Christ, who seeing he hath bought so many to Heaven to sing Praises as Redeemer, for ever, he hath also in the Bargain, that they should be preserved safe in their Mother's Womb, brought out of their Mother's Bowels in safety, preserved so long from Death, till the Mansions were prepared for them : Thus Faith readeth special Love, in these common Favours ; for as to the ransomed Ones, they run in a Channel of free Grace and everlasting Love : And Faith seeth a Connexion betwxt these and more special spiritual Favours ; and as they are in the Hand of a Father, and ordered by him, and have a Tendency to promote their spiritual good, which they have through the blessing of the Lord ; so that even, by the Consideration of these, which are obvious, when other more special Mercies cannot be apprehended, and with Confidence improved, Faith can suck reviving Strength.

7. When in Reference to a Church all Things look dark and dismal like, all being broken, and out of Order, and his broken among themselves, yea divided and subdivided in Judgment and Affection ; yea in such a Condition, as would prognostick as sad Things, as what they may be under presently, even though they were delivered from under the present Rod, and freed from the present pressing Dispensations ; so that the People of God, that consider all these Things, cannot tell what to ask or desire of the

Lord.

Lord; are not certain that a Delivery from the present Dispensation, under which they are, would be their Mercy. This doubtless is a very sadning, and Heart-breaking Dispensation, and enough to cause one conclude the Case desperate: Yet even in such a Case as this is, Faith can breathe and bring in a Cordial unto a fainting Soul, by eyeing the Lord, as one that can finish the Account, and cut the Work short in Righteousness; because a short Work will the Lord make upon the Earth, Rom. 9. 28. Faith can pause and meditate upon these Words, Isai. 66. 7, 8, 9. Before she travailed, she brought forth, before her Pain came, she was delivered of a Man-child: who hath heard such a Thing? who hath seen such a Thing? Shall the Earth be made to bring forth in one Day? Shall a Nation be born at once; for as soon as Zion travailed she brought forth her Children? Shall I bring to the Birth, and not cause to bring forth, saith the Lord: Shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the Womb saith the Lord? Faith will say, If the Redeemer come, all Divisions, all Animosities, all Distances, all Prejudices, all Mistakes, all Darknesses shall vanish; one Blink of the King's Face shall cause all his loyal Subjects flock together, and forget their private Quarrels; if he but once look over the Mountains, the very dawning of his Day shall send Light from east to west, and shall dispel all Darkness and Clouds; that in his Light, they who formerly wandered in Darkness, shall see Light.

8. When the honest Sympathizer with the Church, and Wrestler for her, can see no Token for good, in her; can espie nothing in her Disposition and Frame, that can give Encouragement, or prove a plausible Ground of Hope: And when possibly Sense of Guilt, and Conscience of Abuse of former loving kindnesses, scarteth from a confident Approach unto God to plead upon these Grounds: Yet, even then Faith can help unto a Life of Hope, and plead upon the Nature, Disposition, Cruelty, inerate Malice, and Hatred, Rage, Power, and Blasphemy of the Enemies. How oft

oftfind we David holding forth the wicked Disposition, the cruel Carriages, the profane and Godless Pranks, outragious and blasphemous Belchings of his Enemies ? See Psal. 9. 6; and 74. 3, 10, 18. and 13. 4. and 56. 2. and 59. 4. and 71. 10. and many other Places. So doth Hezekiah spread Rabshakeb's Railings before the Lord. We see how Moses did plead upon this Account, Numb. 14. Nay, the Lord himself giveth Ground for this, and Faith looketh well to that, and draweth Comfort from it, Deut. 32. 26, 27 I said, I would scatter them into Corners, I would make the Remembrance of them to cease from among Men : Were it not that I feared the Wrath of the Enemy, lest their Adversaries should behave themselves strangely ; lest they should say, Our Hand is high, and the Lord hath not done all this. This was the Ground of the sad Desolations, threatned against Mount Seir, Ezek. 35. 10, 11, 12, 13. Because thou hast said, These two Nations, and these two Countries shall be mine, and we will possess it ; whereas the Lord was there. Therefore as live, saith the Lord God, I will even do according to thine Anger, and according to thine Envy, which thou hast used, out of thine Hatred against them, — and thou shalt know that I am the Lord, and that I have heard all thy Blasphemies, which thou hast spoken against the Mountains of Israel, Saying, They are laid desolate, they are given us to consume. Thus with your Mouth, ye have boasted against me, and have multiplied your Words against me: I have heard, &c. Thus the Lord threatned to do to this cruel and unnatural Brother : And the like we have against Moab and Ammon, Zeph. 2. 8, 9, 10. I have heard the Reproach of Moab, and the revilings of the Children of Ammon, whereby they have reproached my People, and magnified themselves against their Border : Therefore, as I live saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the Children of Ammon as Gomorrah, the breeding of Nettles and Salt Pits, and a perpetual Desolation, the residue of my People shall spoil them, and the remnant of my People shall possess them. This shall they have for their Pride ; because they reproached and magnified themselves against

gainst the People of the Lord God. We see also, in the prophecy of Obadiah, how the Lord taketh notice of Esau's Violence against his Brother Jacob. Moreover, Faith stateth these Enemies, before the Lord, as his Enemies, and as engaged in War against him, as taking his Name in vain, *Psal. 139. 10.* as stoning in the midst of his Congregations, as casting Fire into his Sanctuary, as defiling the Dwelling-place of his Name to the very Ground, as blaspheming his Name, *Psal. 74. 3, 4, 7, 10.* and this giveth Ground of Hope, that whatever the Lord's People be, the Lord will take Course with his own Enemies, and judge them for the Wrongs they have done to himself, and to his Interest, for their Enmity and Malice against himself. And howbeit his People cannot but acknowledge the Lord's Righteousness, in punishing them by these proud, profane blasphemous and wicked Enemies, who are the Rod in his Hand; yet Faith can make much of this, that as to these Enemies, they are innocent, having deserved no such Thing at their Hands; and that these Enemies are persecuting them; because they will not sin and rebel more against God, and renounce him, as they have done; and because they own the Lord and his Interest, in some Measure, by some poor and inconsiderable Profession; and the more they cleave to God, and carry like Saints, the more they are hated with pure Hatred: So that the main Quarrel is, because they have some Relation to God, some Interest in him, and some Adherence to him; it is for his Sake, that they are killed all the Day long, *Psal. 44. 22.* and bear Reproach, *Psal. 69. 7. Jer. 15. 15.* See *Matth. 5. 11.* and *10. 18, 22. Mark 13. 9, 13. Luke 21. 12, 17.* and *9. 24. Mark 8. 35. Matth. 10. 39.* and *16. 25.* and *24. 9.*

9. When Dispensations would say, There is no Hope, the Lord will not hear, he hath said, He will destroy and make an End: What more discouraging and fainting Thought can there be, than thus? What

can support in such a Case? What can keep from Despondency and utter Despair? Yet Faith can with an humble Importunity, renew its Suit, and say, O Lord, I cannot tak: that for my last Answer, I will wait for another. The People of Israel, *Judg.* 10. got a sad Answer to their first Suit, *Verses* 11, 13, 14, even this in express Terms, wherefore I will deliver you no more. Which was not only a refusing to grant their Desire, but a Refusal founded upon Grounds of Justice and Equity, and deduced by a lawful Consequence from their former Miscarriages: Yet they gave it not over for all this, but renewed their Suit, and the Lord's Soul was grieved for the Misery of Israel; he could not, as it were, say them nay: So when the Lord threatened to destroy Israel in the Wilderness, for making the golden Calf, and said to Moses, *Exod.* 32. 10 Now therefore let me alone that my Wrath wax hot against them, and that I may consume them, and will make of thee a great Nation, did Moses, upon this last and discouraging Word, give over the Matter as desperate? No, he would not take that for his last Answer, but pleaded with the Lord on their Behalf in the following Verses; and the Lord repented of the Evil, which he thought to do unto his People *Verse* 14. The like valiant Exercise of Faith, we see in the Woman of Canaan, *Matt.* 15.

10 When Temptation would say, How can we look for such a Thing? Was there ever a Case parallel to ours? Have we an Instance of any such Precedent; that a People, in such a Case, were so delivered and brought out of Trouble: And when the serious Soul is running hither and yond, and making a diligent Search to find out a parallel Case, to give it Comfort, and through Confusion, Prejudice, or Perplexity of Heart, can fall upon none; sure the Case must be very sad, and disconsolate: But will Faith find any Ground of Hope and Comfort, in such a Case, as this? Yes, Faith can answer all these Objections, and repel all these Discouragements with

this. The Lord can do a new Thing, according as he hath said, *Ifaz. 43. 18, 19* Remember ye not the former Things, neither consider the Things of old. Behold, I will do a new Thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a Way in the Wilderness, and Rivers in the Desert. Faith can look upon the Lord as an absolute Prince, who can create new Means, new Methods; and go out of all former Roads, for the Glory of his Name.

11. When Temptation would say, How can such Mercy and Delivery be expected, when People are so out of Frame, so little humbled by all the Strokes they have been under, as stubborn and rebellious, as ever? is not this the Lord's usual Way, to bring his People first upon their Knees, to make them confess their Sins, and give Glory unto the Lord? and when there is nothing of this, how can an Outgate be expected. This is sad, and very dejecting. But what will Faith do now, for a Life in this Case? Faith hath several noble actings to support in this Case; or it can say, If the Lord think good to follow this usual Method, he may; and yet it will conceive of Hope; because Faith will put the healing of backslidings on him, whose Work alone it is, and lay it at his Door: Who only can do it, and thereupon lead with him, that he would turn his People, saying Turn us and we shall be turned; as the Lord taught his Disciples to say, even when they were like a Bullock unaccustomed to the Yoke, *Jer. 31. 18* and as the people were taught to pray in the Captivity, *Lam. 21*. Faith can also see, that the Lord can take Sovereign Ways; for the shewing forth of the Sovereignty of his Grace; and therefore may first deliver our world, and then pour forth of his Spirit, as *Ezek. 36. 24*, For I will take you from among the Heathen and gather you out of all Countries, and will bring you into your own Land: Then will I sprinkle clean Water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your works will I cleanse you, &c. Faith can call to Mind, that many such Things are with him; according to that

that wonderful Dispensation promised, *Isai.* 57. 16
 17, 18. For I will not contend for ever ; neither will I be a
 ways wroth : For the Spirit should fail before me, and the
 Souls I have made : For the Iniquity of his Covetousness was
 I wroth, and smote him : I bid me and was wroth, and he
 went on forwardly in the Way of his Heart : I have seen
 his Ways, and I will heal him ; I will lead him also and restore
 Comforts unto him, and to his Mourners.

12. When Temptations with humane Reason are
 proposing many strong Difficulties, and insolluble
 Knots, and hard Questions, that the tossed Man can
 not answer. In this Case Faith can furnish a Cordial
 and take a Course, that cannot but make the Soul lift
 up his Head in Hope : And that is, when Questions
 and Objections are proposed, whether by one or
 other, which the Man cannot answer, Faith takes
 them away to God, who can answer; and puts them
 in the Hand of Sovereign Wisdom and Grace, to elsp
 loose Knots of Difficulties, and make Connexions at
 Consistencies, which none else can, as taught to us
 so by God's Example, *Jer.* 3. 19. where the Lord
 proposeth the Question, How shall I put thee among the
 Children, and give thee a pleasant Land, a goodly Herit
 age of the Hosts of Nations ? and who could answer the By
 Question ? Could Israel answer it, who had done more
 treacherously with God, as a Wife dealeth treach
 erously with her Husband, Verse 20. No surely
 But the Lord answereth it himself, saying, And I say unto
 Thee shalt call me, My Father, and shalt not turn away
 from me : That is, God would make them to be what
 they were not ; he would make them renew their And
 Covenant again with him, and give them Grace by
 stand to it. Faith eyeth him as one, that can no
 wonderful Connexions ; such as that, *Isai.* 43. 22,
 24, 25. Sad Things the Lord is laying to their Charge, not
 their not calling upon him, their being weary of his
 and of his Service and publick Worship ; that instead
 of serving him with their Substance, they made him
 serve with their Sins, and wearied him with their
 quieties. Now what would any think should be

ext Word? might not any suppose, that it would
be some heavy threatening? and yet with a special
emphasis, he saith, *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy
transgressions, for mine own sake, and will not remember thy
iniquities.* Another Instance we have *Isai:59:* where from the
beginning there is nothing but Sin, and that particu-
larly branched forth, charged upon them and Strokes
following thereupon, and yet no Amendment; but
the Growth in all Sort of wickedness; and Matters were
come to that Height, that Judgment was turned away
backward, Justice stood afar off, Truth was fallen in
the Streets, and Equity could not enter; yea Truth
lied, and he that departed from evil made himself
Prey: And this the Lord saw, and it displeased him,
that there was no Judgment; and he saw, that there
was no Man, and wondered that there was no Inter-
Isai:59, Verses 14, 15, 16. And was not this a very
desperate-like Case? What could be expected next,
but utter upgiving? yet see what a Connexion and
Consequence the Sovereignty of Grace maketh: *There-
fore his Arms brought Salvation to him, and his Righteous-
ness sustained him, &c.* Many more such might be
named, but these may serve for an Instance.

By all which we see, how Faith, by its special and
more rare actings contributeth unto this Life, in a
Day of Calamity and Distress, publick or private. A
Word now of the scriptural Grounds of this Truth,
that *he just liveth by Faith,* (which was the Thing to be
spoken to in the third Place) will serve for Con-
firmation.

And First, As for the Life of Justification, that this
by Faith, will not be much questioned by any,
who readeth Paul's Epistles, especially that to the
Romans, and that to the *Galatians,* where this Truth
is not only asserted, but demonstrated by many Argu-
ments. We shall not therefore insist in citing
Scriptures to this End, seeing the evincing of this is the
Scope of a considerable Part of those Epistles. It is
enough, that the Apostle hath told us, in both those

Epistles, that in Reference to Justification, where he is there treating, the Just shall live by Faith Rom: 1: 17. Gal. 3: 11.

Secondly, It is no less clear and evident, that the Life of Sanctification is by Faith: For by it Christ dwelleth in the Heart, Ephes: 3: 17. and by it the Heart is purified, Act: 15: 9: and the World is overcome John 5: 4. And the Apostle asserts this plainly and expressly, Gal: 2: 20: —— And the Life which I now live in the Flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God. Faith setteth to Obedience, Heb: 11: 7, 8.

So 3. The Life of Peace is through Faith, for being justified by Faith, we have Peace with God Rom: 5: 1: It is in Christ, to whom we must be united by True Faith, that we have Peace, John 16: 33: He keepeth them in perfect Peace, whose Minds are stayed on him; because they trust in him, Isai: 26: 3.

4. The Life of Access to and Communion with God, is also had and keepeed up by Faith. This Boldness and Access with Confidence is by the Faith of Christ, Ephes: 3: 12.

5. The Life of Hope is likewise by Faith, for Hope groweth out of the Stock of Faith, and cannot be without it, there is a believing in Hope. And the Church, Lam: 3: 24: soundeth her Hope upon this The Lord is my Portion, saith my Soul: Therefore have I hope. David charged his Soul to hope in God, and why? because he was the Health of his Countenance and his God, Psal: 42: and 43.

6. The Life of Patience is through Faith, he who believeth will not make haste, Isai: 28: 16: and therefore will wait in Patience. And the trying of Faith worketh Patience, James 1: 3: What made Micah, in Name of the Church, Chap: 7: 7: say, will look unto the Lord, I will wait? because of what added, for the God of my Salvation: My God will help me, So Isai: 25: 9. Lo this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us.

7. So the Life of Courage, Resolution, and Establishment

ere is through Faith : David encouraged himself in the Lord his God, 1 Sam. 30: 6: Standing fast in the Faith, and being strong go together, 1 Cor: 16: 13: Believe in the Lord your God, (said good King Jebrishaphat, 2 Chron: 20. 20.) so shall you be established. And Esaias said, Chap. 7. 9. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established. 8. So Finally, The Life of Joy is through Faith. What made Habakkuk rejoice over all supposable discouragements ? He was the God of his Salvation, The Lord God was his strength ; and he was sure, he would make his Feet like Hind's, and make him to walk upon his high places, Hab: 3: 18, 19:

Thus we see how the Scripture confirmeth this Truth. That the Just live by Faith, and that as to all its Parts or Ingredients.

We saw before, C H A P. III. what Ground of Grief and Sorrow there was, upon the Account that there was so little of this Life, here spoken of, in a Day of Trouble, evidenced by several considerable Symptoms of a Decay hereof ; and here we may see the cause thereof, to wit, Want of, or a Decay in the lively Exercise of Faith : For this Life is had, kept and nourished by Faith : And when Faith is lively and strong, this Life receiveth a proportionable Vigour ; and it decayeth and falleth back, as Faith becometh languid and weak. And that it is thus with Faith to Day, as to too many, these Things may evidence.

1. Is it not manifest and undeniable, That the Changes and Alterations we find in our Frames and Disposition, whereby we are sometimes lifted up, and again, at other Times cast down, depend upon, and are caused by the Probability or Improbability, Relief, Help or Outgate; that we observe in outward Dispensations ; so as when any Thing occurreth falleth out, that hath a promising Aspect, in our apprehensions unto a Delivery, we are lifted up above Measure ; and again, when these hopeful-like Appearances evanish a little out of our Sight, we are

as much dejected, as ever we were elevated ; yea and our Disappointment maketh our down-casting more grievous and afflicting, whereas were we living by Faith, it would not be thus with us ; because the Grounds, whereupon Faith standeth, are more fixed and unvariable ; the Promiser and the Promises remaining still the same, whatever Clouds, tossed and carried with Winds, intercept the Light and Warme thereof, and whatever outward Dispensations may seem to say : These may alter daily, as the Lord seeth fit ; yet the Lord abideth the same, without a Change or Shadow of turning, *James 1. 17.* His Thoughts are to all Generations, *Psal. 33. 11.* And his Truth endureth to all Generations, *Psal. 100.* so that the pure Ground of Faith is immovable, like the great Mountains : Were our Faith anchored and fixed upon this Ground, we could not but be more equable in our Deportment, under all the manifold Changes and Alterations, in outward Appearances.

2. Our fainting, sinking through Discouragement, and our Heartlessness, when we see not all Things going in our Mind, is another Evidence of the Want of the lively Exercise of Faith : For were our Hearts fixed trusting in the Lord, all the sad Aspect of outward Dispensations would not take both Heart and Head from us, nor unhinge us, nor make us so weak, as we could stand under no Burthen ; Were Faith in Exercise our Strength would remain with us ; for they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their Strength, *Is. 40. 31.* I had fainted, (as it is supplied, *Psal. 27. 13*) unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord, in the Land of the living : Unless he had a^ded Faith thus, he could not tell what a sad Case he had been into ; in a Man he had been no Man more, he had been nothing.

3. This is also evident by another sad Effect thereof, which is the many inward unsuitable Thoughts and Reasonings of Mind, unhandsom Questions, inward Grudgings, Quarrellings, Repinings, Wonderings and Amazements ; which argue more

that we live by Sense, than that we live by Faith : which in Exercise would soon hush all these disorderly and unsuitable Motions to the Door, and keep the Soul in a composed, peaceable, well satisfied, and waiting Posture. The Want of the Exercise of Hope, which is accompanied with, and caused by the Want of the Exercise of Faith, is the Cause of the Soul's being disquieted within a Man, *Psal. 42.* and *43.*

As also this is too evident by the abounding and predomining of carnal Fears, which prove most noxious unto the Soul, not only indisposing it for present Duty, but also making it a Prey for every Wind of Temptation : Whileas, Faith doth ballast the Soul, and putteth the Man in Case to resist the Devil, and quench his fiery Darts, *1 Pet. 5. 9.* *Ephes. 6. 16.* with dispelleth all the black and melancholious clouds of Fear, and hardneth the Soul against them, we see, *Psal. 27. 1, 2, 3.* and *46. 1, 2.*

The too much abounding of carnal Security andupidity, is another Evidence of a Decay in Faith ; where it is in vigour and Life, the Soul is kepted a watching and diligent Frame : Faith keepeth the heart tender, and maketh the Man keep far off from every Appearance of evil, and every Course that may the least dishonour the Lord : As it is an Enemy carnal and slavish Fear ; so it is the great Fosterer Godly Fear, and a Friend to it : Faith is accompanied with a watchful Tenderness, especially in a Day of Temptation ; and it maketh the Soul careful that there be no sinful ceding or yielding unto the Temporal ; and causeth it guard against the sinful Byas or inclination of the evil Time : But when Men are gone from their Watchtower, and asleep, or under the power of a Spirit of Indifference, in the Lord's Mat-ches, there can be little of the Exercise of this Grace sub there.

The disquieting and distracting Cares and thoughts about Events, is another Evidence of the weakness of Faith : The believing Soul hath sol-

led all these upon the Lord, and looketh upon them, as none of his Concernment, but as properly belonging to the Lord, who is the great Rector of the World, and Disposer of all Things, both within and without the Church; and looketh upon Duty, as the Main of his Concernment, and so is freed of these vexing, distracting, tormenting, and perplexing Thoughts and Cares about this Event, or that Event. The People in the Wilderness were vexed with Cares about their Livelihood and Provision; and when they got one Thing, they were vexed with the Thoughts how they should get another Thing, which they desired; and therefore had many tempting Questions; but all flowed from this. *They believed not in God, and trusted not in his Salvation,* Psal. 78. 32. and 106. 24.

7. This appeareth too much by our upstirring and wearying, as to several Duties, which such a Day calleth for, and which Faith in Life and Exercise would prompt unto, and qualify for; such as Submission unto the Lord's Disposal; Patience under his Hand; Prayer for a right Frame under the Dispensation, and for an Outgate in God's due Time; Mortification to the World, and to the enticing Vanities thereof; Repentance of the Evils, that have provoked the Lord hereunto; Zeal for God, and his suffering Interests; mutual upstirring and encouraging in the Lord. Were Faith lively, these and the like would have an answerable Liveliness and Lustre.

8. The too great Promptitude and Readiness of Mind and Inclineableness of Heart to hearken unto any Offer made, that promise Rest and Quietness, and have no with them too palpable, obvious and plain Repugnancy to former Foundations, known Principles and avowed Practices, is another Evidence of the Decay of Faith: Had Moses's Faith been under such a Decay, he would not have scrupled to be called the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter; but would have thought it Wisdom and Policy, to have remained passive therein, and kept himself in Case to have done some Pieces of good

od Service unto his Brethren, the Hebrews: But we
ar that by Faith he refused to be so called, yea and
oosed rather to suffer Affliction with the People of
od, than to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin for a Season,
b. 11. 24, 25.

These and other Things of this Nature may suffi-
evidence, how little there is of this Faith ;
d how rare the lively Actings thereof are, this Day:
d if we consider the Evil of this Evil, to wit, of
Decay or not acting of Faith, at such a Time, we
ll see Cause for all the many and various Distempers,
tare upon our Spirits; for according to our Faith,
is our Life in a Day of Trouble: Whence we
how hereby we prejudge our selves of that excel-
nt Life, that might be, and is had by Faith, in such
Day; and of all the refreshing, comfortable and
porting Fruits and Effects of it in the Soul: And
ut these are, we will see by looking back to Chap.
where the Nature and Workings of this Life were
ken to.

And if any should enquire, Whence this cometh,
l there is so little of this Faith ? we might al-
many Causes thereof, such, to wit, as are procur-
Causes of it, and introductory to it; but we shall
mention a few, which withall may help forward
Conviction of the Rarity of this Grace in Ex-
ise this Day: As,

Little real going out of our selves, and renoun-
g our own Wit, Strength, Courage and Parts:
is both provoking to the Lord, to withdraw his
aences, and is naturally introductory of this not
ieving. When we lean to our own Understand-
we cannot trust in the Lord: These two go
ether, Prov. 3. 5. *Trust in the Lord with all thine Heart,*
lean not to thine own Understanding. Faith carrieth
Man out of himself; and is the Result of a Man's
pairing of Help and Throwbearing in himself, and
his renouncing all that is his own: So that where
is not thoroughly done; but there is still some-
thing after, Trusting to and Leaning upon some-

thing that is within us, and that we can call ours, Faith is not exercised to the Life; but according to that hankering of Heart after these Things within us, there is a proportionable Weakness in our Faith.

2. Too much depending upon, and looking after second Causes argueth too little Faith, and provoketh God to give us up to follow our own Way. It is true, we are not allowed to tempt the Lord, or to despise Means; yet it is as true, that he alloweth us not to place all our Confidence in them. yea, or so to use them, as to place any of our Trust and Confidence in them: Means are but Means, and signify nothing, where the Lord blesse' h not, and therefore the Lord will not have us quite despond and sink through Discouragement, when we have not our Eyes filled with good and hopeful Means. Alas! what can second Causes do without the first? and cannot the first and suprem Cause do without them, if he will? when then our Hearts go out after second Causes and Means, as it provoketh the Lord to Anger; so it evidenceth little pure Dependence upon God, to whom it is all one to save by many, or by few.

3. Little studying to get the Heart impressed with the Nature and Attributes of God, doth sinfully procure and dispose to Unbelief; for where the Truth of God's being Unchangeable, Almighty, True and Faithful, deeply impressed in our Hearts, it would be more easie for us to give Credit to his Word, and to believe in Hope against Hope: But the weariness out of the Impression of these glorious Attributes both evidenceth a decay in Faith, and causeth it. So that the Root of this Evil is real Atheism.

4. This Unbelief and Decay in Faith floweth also from the not studying nor considering the Providential Workings and Appearances of God of old and of late, little seeing and observing of the Hand of a Faithful God in all that is done, and hath been wrought; little noticing of his Wheel in the midst of all the Wheeles of Men. As the not observing of this most remarkable

Thin

thing argueth little spiritual Wisdom or Prudence, Psal. 14. 9. so it causeth a great Decay of Faith ; here is the Nourishment, as it were, of Faith ; and when this is away, Faith must become sick and weak.

5. This Decay floweth also from and is occasioned by Ignorance, and not studying of that eternal and everlasting Ground of Confidence and Hope, *to wit*, the Covenant of Redemption, wherein all that either in the Church, or any particular Soul can stand in need of, is fully and for ever secured upon all Hands, and against all Hazards : Were this Rock more in our view, our Faith and Confidence would be more firm.

6. This Decay of Faith floweth from little dwelling upon the Promises : Faith cannot live without the Word of Promise. It is upon the Word of Promise, that he causeth his People hope, Psal. 119. 49. It is this Word of his that quickeneth, Verse 50. When the Promises are out of Sight, which are all Amen and Amen in Christ, Faith cannot but lose its ground. The ancient Believers recorded, Heb. 11. that died in Faith, though they did not receive the Things promised, yet by Faith they saw them afar off in the Promises, and seeing them in the promises, were persuaded of them, and embraced them ; they rested upon the Promiser, and were persuaded all would be according as he had promised : And thus they lived by Faith.

7. As the Nature of Faith is to unite the Soul unto Christ, and to God through Christ, and to make us like of Christ, and of his Fulness in all their Straits and Difficulties, and to cast all these Cases and Cumberances on him ; so the little abiding in Christ, and approving of him, and the not going to God daily through him, causeth a Decay universal, and particularly in Faith, as to other Duties of the Day. Except we abide in him, we cannot bring forth Fruit, John 15. 4.

Having thus laid down some Particulars, where-

by this Evil is discovered to be among us to the End, we may be both affected with it, and moved to wrestle against it, and to seek to be from under the Power of it ; let us consider the sinful Evils that are in it, and see if it be not a Sin of a more than ordinary deep Dye : A few Instances will suffice to evince this.

1. This is the main Duty, that is called for in such a dark and dismal Day, that the Children of God should in a special Manner act Faith : Now should they believe or never : And if every Thing be beautiful in its Season, acting of pure Faith in such a Day, must have a special heavenly Lustre and Beauty in it; and the Want of it must be a most unseasonable Want ; and render the Soul very deformed. Must it not then be an exceeding sinful Thing to want Faith, and the peculiar Actings of it, in the proper Season ? How unhandsom is it for a Soldier to lay aside his Shield, in the very Day of Battel, and to have it a seeking, when he is to encounter the Enemy ? when should Seamen make Use of their Cables and of their Anchors, if not in a Storm ? and who would sail or venture their Goods with such Seamen, as would make no Use of their Tows and Anchors in such a Time, but leave the Ship to the Mercy of Wind and Wave ?

2. This Grace of Faith in Exercise, is the proper Badge and Character of a Child of God in such a Day : They are Believers ; and what are Believers, but such as believe and give Credit to the Word of God. Now when they do not believe, in a Time when they should most believe, how shall it appear that they are Believers, wherefore, the not believing now, when believing is most requisite, must upon the Matter, be a renouncing of their Christianity, and a professing of themselves to be no more Believers. And what an horious Iniquity this is, who seeth not

3. The want of this Grace in Exercise, in such an evil Time, doth unhinge, indispose, and unfit the Soul,

oul for any other Duty, requisite in that Day ; and must be a most dangerous and sinful Evil. He who layeth aside his Faith in that Day, layeth aside also his Repentance, his Christian Patience, Helmet of Hope, his suitable Submission, his Dependence upon God, his Use making of the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, his Girdle of Truth; and in a Word, he layeth aside his whole Armour, and all his Christian Exercise ; for he cannot pray aright, he cannot meditate on the Works and Word of God aright, he cannot read the Word with Profit, nor can he hear it preached with Profit, all which is so manifest, that needeth no Confirmation, and doth clearly demonstrate the evil of this Sin.

4. There is herein a great Indignity done to God, Father, Son and holy Ghost. The Father is hereby declared to be not worthy of Credit, and that his Truth faileth, and therefore his Promises are not to be trusted to like these, *Psal. 106. 24.* Such, sure, cannot hope in his Word, as David did, *Psal. 130. 5.* or say, That his Word is true, as he did, *Psal. 119. 60.* The Lord Jesus is also hereby affronted ; for not to believe now, is as much as to say, He hath not confirmed the Covenant ; he hath not made a purchase of all these good Things promised, he hath not gotten all Power in Heaven and in Earth, he will not be Faithful in his Administration ; all the Promises are not Yea and Amen in him, he is not the mean, the Faithful and true Witness ; so that howe'er this draweth, none can be ignorant : So likewise the holy Ghost is hereby injured, as if he were not the holy Spirit of Promise, nor the Spirit of Truth.

5: Such as do not now believe, but give Way to belief, sin against the Generation of the Children of God, *Psal. 73. 15.* and so bring a Reproach upon the Profession of Godliness and Christianity, and give Ground to others to think, that it is no real Thing, a meer Fancy, for a fair Day to make a Flourish without

withall which may be laid aside in a Winter-stormy Day. Is there a Truth and Reality in the Promises, and is their real Worth and Excellency in the Things promised? why then (might Strangers say) are not these received, embraced, closed with and rested upon, in an evil Day, when the Faith of them were the only Mean to support under Pressures, and to carry thorow Difficulties? will any Man think, That a strong Cable can keep a Ship fast in a Storm, more than a weaker Tow, when he seeth that Seamen lay them by and cast all their Cables over Board, when a Storm beginneth? is it not then manifest, how great a Reproach this bringeth upon Christianity?

6. Not to believe now, doth virtually and interpretatively overturn all Christian Religion; for when we believe not the Promises, we say, They are not true: And if these be not true, where is our Religion? If one Promise may be questioned and doubted of, all may fall under the same Suspicion; and if all the Promises be dubious, and all the Prophets be Liars, where are we?

7. Yea, at length, if we follow this forth, it will and must land us at Atheism: For if any of the Promise of God be untrue; he is no more the God of Truth and a God that cannot lie; and he who is not that, is not the True and Living God.

By these few Particulars we may see, what great Reason we have both to mourn for the Unbelief, that is to be found in too great Abundance this Day, where Faith is especially called for: As also to guard against the Growth or Continuance hereof; and for this Cause to be watching against those Evils that bring it on, which we lately mentioned; and especially to guard against,

8. Sins that bring on a Distance from Christ, the Fountain and Spring of all our Life and Faith, that is, all Gross and presumptuous Sins, and also other Sins unrepented of; for these will Piece and Piece draw the Soul away from God, and separate betwixt him and

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us: And so long as we are at a Distance from God, we shall never be in Case to live the Life of Faith.

2. *Presumption or carnal Confidence*; for if we trust to rotten Reeds, they will fail us: Our Knowledge of the Truth or Experiences, our supposed Stock, our Wit and Understanding, and other Things of that Nature, will disappoint us, and break under us, if we lay too much Weight upon them: We know the sad Instance of Peter.

3. *Carnal Security*; for hereby we tempt God, and put our selves out of Case to act Faith, as a valiant Soldier. That watch Word should still ring in our Ears, *What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch*. If ever we watch, we should watch when the Devil is roring, and when our Walls are besieged; & if we sleep then, we will not be in Case to make Use of our Shield.

4. *Forgetfulness of God, and of his Word, and Works* is another Evil, that we should guard against, if we would believe: For if we lose these, we lose the Object of Faith; and no Act can be without its Object: See *Psal. 78. 22, 42.*

5. *Consulting with Flesh and Blood, and construing all Things according to humane Reason, and humane Appearance*, is an Enemy to Faith; so that where it is, Faith is put to the Door; for Faith is the Substance of Things hoped for, and the Evidence of Things not seen. *Heb. 11. 1.*

6. *Tempting and limiting of the holy One of Israel*, is no Friend to Faith, as we see, *Psal. 78. 18, 22, 41*. computed together. This therefore would also be guarded against.

From what is said, it clearly followeth, That all who desire to enjoy a Life, in an evil Time, should mind and set about this Duty of Faith, whereby this Life is had and kepted. We saw above, what Influence Faith had unto this Life; and this Necessity of it, in Reference to Life, when nothing else will contribute to Life in an evil Time, if Faith be wanting, is sufficient to enforce the Endeavour after the Study

Study and Exercise of it, and that with all Diligence, and Haste. And if it be enquired, How this Faith, that will be a mean to Life in such a dismal Day, shall be won at I shall shortly propose these few Particulars.

1. It is first of all necessary to this End, That the Man be united unto Jesus Christ by Faith, and that the Marriage be made up betwixt Christ and his Soul, that he may become reconciled unto the Lord, and so live the Life of Justification through Faith: For he must first be a just Man, that is, one clothed with the imputed Righteousness of Christ, before he can live this Life; because it is the just that live this Life: And till the first and principal Act of Faith be done, there will be no Acting of Faith; now the first and principal Act of Faith is this uniting Act, whereby whole Christ is received, as offered in the Gospel; the Soul must have an Interest in Christ, and be united with him, and related to him, before it can make any Application to him, or any Improvement of him, for any such End, as this is.

2. Care would be had to keep this Interest in Christ distinct and clear: I do not mean, that every sincere Believer will attain unto this Perswasion, or to clear Evidences of his Interest in Christ; nor do I mean, that none will be in Case to live by Faith, in a Day of Calamity and Tribulation, but such as have attained unto this Assurance: But my Meaning is, that the more clear and distinct this Interest be, it will be the better in such a Day; it will be more easie for such, as see their Names written in the Book of Life, to venture on seen Hazards, for the Testimony of Jesus, than for such as have no Light in that Matter, but are walking in Darkness, and are under Doubts. I grant withall, that the Lord, for holy and wise Reasons, may carry a Soul thorow Temptations, in a Day of Trial, in a more cleanly Manner, and with less Disadvantage to the Cause, or Advantage to Enemies, that never knew what Assurance meant, nor did see its being in the Light.

by the Light of the Lord; when he may leave another that hath attained unto an high Measure of Assurance to step aside. Therefore,

3. All, who have in Truth looked towards Christ, and are heartily satisfied with the Terms of Salvation in him, would be careful to live near Jesus: For as without him, they can do nothing at any Time; so far less will they be able to suffer, and to wade through a Sea of great Tribulation, without him. They would then be careful to cast themselves in Christ's Arms daily, in the Conviction of their own Weakness; and as perswaded of an Impossibility of riding out the Storm, without his Help and Grace; and without new and fresh Supplies of Influences for their throw-bearing.

4. Care would be used to keep from all God-provoking Courses: We would beware to sin the Lord's way, when we have so much need of his Help: A tender and circumspet watchful Walk is very necessary at such a Time. Sins committed should not be lien in, but carried away to the Fountain in Haste, that they may be washen away in the Blood of the Lamb. Especially Care would be had against the Beginnings of a Defection. It is not good too boldly to draw too nigh to the Brink: It is best to fear always, and to keep far off from yieldings, or from what hath but an Appearance of Evil: A Mint (as we say) unto a sinful Compliance, in a Day of Temptation, though but in a small Measure, when done deliberately, may provoke the Lord more than a greater sin, at another Time; as a wrong Look in a Child, while the Father is correcting him, may be much more provoking than at another Time.

5. There is a waiting and hanging upon God by Faith, that we may have Faith in such a Day; a believing that we may believe: Christ being the Author and Finisher of Faith, and the great Prince and Giver thereof, he must be sought to by Faith, for the Gift of the Exercise of Faith, as at all Times, so then especially:

6. It

6. It is necessary at such a Time, to keep the Impressions of God, his Nature and Attributes, fresh and green : To have our Souls daily under the Impressions of God, as Unchangeable, Holy, True, Almighty, Just and Gracious, &c. That our Souls may some Way correspond with these, in a suitable and answerable Frame. So long as the Soul is kept in this Set and Frame, it will be more able to stand in a stormy Day ; whereas when this Impression is lost or worn off, the soul is more ready to be carried about with every Wind of Doctrine, and carried away with every Wind of Temptation.

7. The Nature of the Covenant of Grace, and its Ground and Basis, the Covenant of Redemption, would be well studied, that thereby we may have a clear Prospect of all the grand Resolutions and Determinations of Heaven, and a distinct View of the Progresses and Tendencies of all the Acts of the Providence of God, both more general in the World, and more special in the Church ; and also discover the Connexion betwixt all these Passages, how heterogeneous so ever they appear to Men to be, yea, and destructive unto the hoped Issue, and the grand End intended, that is, the Glory of God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, in the final Salvation of the redeemed Church, and Mystical Body of Christ, in all its Parts and Members : Hereby also we would be in Case to see, how the Promises are all sure in Christ, and principally made to him, as Head ; and how upon many infallible Grounds, they must and shall be all, in due Time, accomplished, whatever Improbabilities yea and (to our Sense) Impossibilities, stand in the Way.

8. We would remember, that others through Grace have been helped to this Life of Faith ; and the same free Grace remaineth : We have the same God to believe in ; the same Mediator of the New Covenant, in whom all the promises are Yea and Amen ; the same Spirit of Life and Truth ; the same Covenant, the same Promises,

9. There are many Grounds of Hope, Comfort, Support, Patience, sweet Submission, Joy, Through-bearing, Peace, Courage, Sedfastness and the like, scattered through the whole Scriptures, in the Goodness and Wisdom of God, which we would do well to study, and be acquainted with; and labour to improve to the Ends designed: For these are as Food to Faith in such a Day; and the more Faith eat and feed upon this Provision of Heaven, it will become the more Fat and Strong. And this leadeth me to what I intend further to handle; that is, to mention some of these many Grounds and Considerations, and to shew how they might be improved in an evil Time, for the strengthening of Faith, and helping to this Life, in such a dead-like Time; knowing how useful and necessary it is to have our thoughts dwelling much upon them, to the End, we may come to know in Experience, what it is to live by Faith, in such a Time as this is, which is intimated to in the Text.

CHAP. VI.

CONSIDERATION I.

God's Presence with his People in Afflictions.

It cannot but be wearisom and irksom to a weak Creature, to be wrestling under an heavy Burthen in a Wilderness, where he hath no Company, and can get no Help; as it would be refreshing and comfortable to him, to have a Second at Hand, ready and willing to put to his Hand, and to bear him Company, though the Load should be heavy, Crosses and afflictions are no easie Burthen for a weak Back: Yet

Yet if the Believer saw by Faith, that the Lord of Hosts, the Almighty God of Jacob, were at Hand, and standing by him with his everlasting Arms, this could not but make him glad and Cheerful, in his saddest Lot; for that, which oftentimes casteth him down, while Afflictions are one his Loins, is the apprehension, that God is departed, and hath left him to wrestle with the Burthen his alone. He cryeth out, He is gone, he is gone, and here am I alone. Now if God's Presence were believed and seen by Faith, would not sad and heavy Afflictions become light?

It will be then of some use to speak a little to this Consideration: Only we would premis these few Things.

1. It seemeth good sometimes unto the Absolute and only Wise God, to exercise some of his own beloved Children, both outwardly and inwardly at once; not only to lay heavy Afflictions upon their Bodies, but also to bid his Face, and thereby afflict their Spirits: Thus we see it was with Job, and with others of the Lord's Worshippers, mentioned in Scripture.

2. Sometimes the Lord doth this in Justice; because of their Provocations: So it was with David, whom the Lord did outwardly afflict, for the Matter of Uriah, and withall upon the same Account, he had many a sad and sharp Hour within as we see, Psalms 6. and 32. and 38. and 51. all penned upon this Occasion. And this, I confess, is yet more grievous and afflicting.

3. Sometimes the Lord may be near to a Believer, in a Time of sore outward Affliction, and yet be, as hid unto him; because through the Confusion that his Soul may be in, through the Violence of the outward Trouble, hurrying him, as it were headlong; he is not in Case to perceive it; like a Child under Water, he may be safe from drowning because in the Father's Arms, and yet not see it. As the Psalmist, *Psal. 73.* while he was violently carried away with

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the Torrent of Temptation, and speaking like a Man
infected, and out of his Christian Wits ; he saw
not that God was standing hard by him, till after-
ward that he came to his Wits again, then he saw,
that even while he was more like a Beast, than a god-
ly Person, the Lord had him in his Hand, *Verses 22,*
3. So foolish was I and ignorant, I was a Beast before thee,
evertheless I was continually with thee, (thou left me
not one Moment of Time) thou hast holden me by my
right Hand.

4. God's Presence with his People, in their As-
spection, is not always after one and the same Manner
and Measure : Sometimes it is more clear, mani-
fest and patent ; sometimes more dark and hid. His
Presence with the three Children in the fiery Furnace
was most manifest and conspicuous ; it is not so
with all. He will be so present with some, as to cause
them triumph over all Hardships, and to rejoice with
joy unspeakable and full of Glory ; and with others
only as to carry them thorow, though with much
burden, Wrestling and Sorrow.

5. It is usual with the Lord, when his People are
suffering for his Cause, and for witnessing to his
Truth, to communicate more of his sensible Presence
unto them, at some Choke, for their Support, and
for the further Vindication of the Truth, and In-
couragement of others to stand fast ; so was it with
Daniel and the three Children, and with the Apostles
many Times : And so hath it been with many Mar-
tyrs in the very Flames. John had his Revelations
at Patmos ; Jeremiah also had the Lord nigh unto him,
in Revelation, of his Mind, while he was in the
dungeon, *Jer. 37. 16, 17.*

6. Even when God is provoked by Peoples Trans-
gressions to hide his Face, and to send on double
afflictions ; though he withdrew his comforting
presence ; yet he leaveth them not altogether ; for he
is still present to keep Life in, otherwise the Seed
would perish, contrair to, *I John 3. 9.* and they
should

should finally and fully fall away, contrary to many Grounds of Scripture.

These Things premised, we say, That the Children of God, in all their Afflictions outward or inward, especially in such, as are for the Testimony of Jesus, have Ground to believe, that they shall enjoy the Presence of God with them, and in the Consideration of this, be comforted over all their Sorrow, having their Spirits stayed in the Midst of other Dis-tempers.

For unfolding of this comfortable Consideration, we shall, *First*, Evince the Truth of it from Scripture, and shew the Ground of Faith for it. *Secondly*, Explicate in some Measure, the Nature of this Presence of God, at such a Time. *Thirdly*, Shew some of the Effects hereof: And *Fourthly*, Point forth what Improvement should be made thereof.

As to the *First* of these, We find several Promises both General and Particular to this Purpose, 1 Sam. 12. 32. — *For the Lord will not forsake his People:* And if this hold good at all Times, much more then, when his People are in a suffering Condition for his Sake, Deut. 31. 6. Moses saith unto the People, on the Lord's Behalf, *He will not leave thee, nor forsake thee.* There was a Promise made to Jacob, Gen. 28. 15. And behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all Places, — *for I will not leave thee.* And the same is renewed unto Joshua, Chap. 1. 5. *I will not fail thee nor forsake thee.* And this all Believers may apply to themselves, in their own particular Cases and Exigences, as the Apostle teacheth us, Heb. 13. 5. saying, *Be content with such Things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* And so, as he would have these Hebrews making use of this Promise, for their own particular Necessity; so he alloweth all the Children of God, to do the like, especially in a Time of Affliction, when at no Time they can stand more in need of the Comfort of this, than when outward Comforts are far removed. Moreover we have a Pro-

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wise of this more particularly relating to an Hour of Affliction and Tribulation, *Isai. 43. 2.* *When thou passest through the Waters, I will be with thee; and through the Rivers, they shall not overflow thee: When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the Flame kindle upon thee.* So that, whatever be the Affliction of his People, represented here by two most terrible Masters, Fire and Water, he hath promised to be with them in it; and so with them, as that they shall not be consumed thereby. The saddest of their Afflictions cannot banish God from them, nor intercept the Beams of his glorious and loving Countenance. *So Isai. 41. 10. Fear thou not for I am with thee.* He not only assurēth them of his Presence, but he would have them also resting so persuaded of it, as that upon the Account thereof, they might hush all Fears to the Door; We find likewise clear Instances hereof, in the Scriptures, as of *Daniel*, and of the three Children formerly mentioned, *Dan. 3. and 6.* But besidesthis, we find some, in Faith of this, resolving not to fear, even when wrestling with the King of Terrors; as *David Psal. 23. 4. Though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no Evil, for thou art with me.* So likewise the Church, *Psal. 46. 7. 11. twice over.* The Lord of Hosts is with us, and upon this Ground resolved, not to fear, through the Earth be removed, and though the Mountains be carried into the midst of the Sea, &c. See likewise, *Psal. 91. Verse 15. 2 Chron. 27. Jerem. 15. 20. and 30. 11. and 46. 28.*

Secondly, As to the Nature of this Presence of God with his People, in a Time of Affliction, these few things may serve to our Purpose.

1. Sometimes, though most rarely, God is present, in a more extraordinary Manner, miraculously defending them from the Rage of their Enemies: As he was present with the three Children in the fiery Furnace, *Dan. 3.* so as the Fire had no Power over them, no not so much as to singe one Hair of their Countaments; for there was a fourth with them, in the

the Furnace, and this Fourth was like unto the Son of Man. In like Manner was he present with Daniel restraining the raging and rampant Lions, that they could not once bite, or break one Bone of Daniel Chap. 6.

2. Sometimes, though Enemies may get their Will yet the Lord may be so present with his People in their Afflictions, that they may be as little troubled or commoved thereat, as if they felt no trouble at all; as he was with some Martyrs, who, while in the Flames did not feel the Force of the Fire, nor had any more Joy Pain, than if they had been lying in a Bed of Down.

3. Sometimes he will send in such a Shower of spiritual Joy and Consolation into their Souls, as will make them sing with Paul and Silas while their Feet are fast in the Stocks, Acts 16, and as it was with that holy Martyr, who, all the Time he was in Prison, had no sensible Presence, or Manifestations, but when on his Way to the Place of Execution, got such a Discovery, as made him cry out to his Fellow-sufferer, *He is come, he is come*: And then give them that Joy unspeakable and full of Glory.

4. Oftimes he is present by clearing up the Promises unto them, suiting that Case, and their Interest in these Promises, and helping them to set Faith therupon, to their Comfort and Joy in the holy Ghost so that they became resolute and steadfast; and with all, may let them see clearly their Interest in him, and his Relation to them, and so fill their Mouths with a Song, as seeing their Names written in the Book of Life; and that all Things work together for their good; and that nothing shall be able to separate them from the Love of God, which is Christ Jesus, Rom. 8. 28, 35, 38, 39. Thus he comforteth some in all their Tribulations, 2 Corin 1. Yea and maketh those Consolations to abound Christ, Verse 5.

5. As to some, though they may be in Darkness as to their State, and feel no Incomes of sensible Consolati-

Consolation & Joy ; yet he may be with them giving Peace and Serenity of Soul, as to their former Walk, and the Cause of their present Sufferings ; so as they may enjoy Quietness of Mind, and the Testimony of good Conscience ; and this is a great Feast, for our rejoicing is this (saith the Apostle, 2 Cor. 1. 12.) the testimony of our Conscience, that in Simplicity and Godly Simplicity, not with fleshly Wisdom ; but by the grace of God, we have had our Conversation in the World. &c.

6. Though some may want all sensible Incomes of Joy, and Consolation ; yet the Lord may be present with them in an hid, unseen and unfelt Way, as to my sensible Appearances, keeping them in the Love of God, and in the Love of his Truth ; and holding them by an unseen Hand, that they will not, they can not buy their Freedom from Trouble, by selling denying the Truth of God. And this Presence will be most sensible in its Effects, which as to Substance, will be the same with the Effects, wrought by the more sensible Manner of God's Presence, formerly mentioned.

Now as to these Effects (which is the Third Particular) of the Presence of God with his People, in the Day of Affliction and Suffering, we shall mention a few, which will contribute to shew the great advantage, that is to be had hereby, in an evil Day.

1. By his Presence the Lord will uphold them in a Day of Distress, and keep them from being overcome or overthrown thereby ; so as though they were troubled on every side, (as it is, 2 Cor. 4. 8, 9.) yet not distressed ; though perplexed, yet not in Despair ; though persecuted, yet not forsaken ; though cast down, yet not destroyed : Fear not, (saith the Lord 41. 10.) for I am with thee, and what followeth on that ? I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee ; I will uphold thee with the right Hand of my Righteousness. So that, when the Lord is present with Believers, they want not Strength and supporting Grace. As was he present with David, Psalm 41. 12. And as for

for me, thou upholdest me in mine Integrity; and settest me before thy Face for ever: But how was this evinced? He mentioned the sweet Effect thereof, Verse 11. By this I know, That thou favourest me; because mine Enemy doth not triumph over me. He had to do with persecuting Adversaries, who were rejoicing to hear of his Sickness, wishing he were once dead, and his Name made to perish; and in their secret Whisperings were railing disadventagious Reports of him; yea and they had their secret Cabals, close Counsels to do him Mischief, with whom conspired even his familiar and true Friend, as the foregoing Verses of the Psalm shew: Yet when his intimate and familiar Friends and domestick forsook him, God did not forsake him, but upheld him in his Integrity, and set him before his Face continually, that he might see, that none should harm him; and he found this Fruit and Effect of it, that he was made to stand against all the Force and Machinations; they could not get all the Will of him: The Lord did not suffer them to triumph over him. And at another Time, when he was put to flee for his Life from Saul into the Wilderness of Judah, in the Forrest of Hareth, 1 Sam. 22. v. 5. he found the same Effect of this Divine Presence which Psalm. 63. 8. (a Psalm penned at that Occasion, as the public Title cleareth) Thy right Hand upholdeth me. Whereby God's right Hand holdeth his People by their right Hand, as it is Isa. 41. 13. they cannot but be held. And this is one notable Effect of his Presence with them, and his Grace thus assisting is sufficient, 1 Cor. 12. 9. No

2. By his Presence he strengtheneth them in the duty of their Adversity; though they be oft like to faint and fall under the Burthen, and have many a heavy Groan and Sigh, as if their very Back were broken with the Load, and hence like to despond through Discouragement and Fear, that one Day or other they shall succumb and give it over; yet he manifesteth his Presence in strengthening of them, Isa. 41. 10. His

and in making that Word good, *Isai. 40: 29.* *He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth Strength:* And thus they renew their Strength, *verse 31.* and by these new Influences, which he can, in an insensible Way, convey in to the Soul, they are made to endure the Storm, with much Christian Patience and Fortitude. The primitive Sufferers found this, when they could endure with admirable Patience to be sawn asunder, rosted on Grid-irons, tormented in Frying-pans, whipped to Death, racked on a Wheel, to have all their Skin slain off them, and to be burnt quick, and put to the most exquisite Torments, their Persecutors could devise. Was not this a wonderful Effect of God's Presence with them, steeling their Hearts, and strengthening them, that they endured all patiently, and would not except of Deliverance, upon any base or sinful Terms? See *Heb. 11. 33.* And the Histories of after persecutions do abundantly also confirm this. See *Tim. 4. 17.* *Nevertheless the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me.*

3. His Presence causeth them to avow and stand to the Maintenance of the precious Truths of God, which are called in Question, and for which they were put to suffer: That was a noble Effect of the Presence of God, with the three Children, that made them tell the King to his Face, threatening them with the fiery Furnace made seven Times hotter than ever, *verse 18.* *Be it known to thee, O King, that we will not serve thy God, nor worship the golden Image, which thou hast set up.* Nothing but the Presence of God made the Martyrs witness a good Confession to the Truth, in the midst of all the Flames and Torments they should meet with. Their Bow abode in Strength, and their Hands were made strong by the Hands of the mighty God of Jacob, as being the kindly Sons or Successors of Joseph, of whom this was foretold, *Gen. 49. 23.*

4. His Presence keeps them safe and steadfast, as to G the

the main Business, of adhering to Christ by Faith
 And herein the Lord is counterworking the Plots of
 Satan and defeating his Counsels; whose chief Design
 is (as to them) to have their Faith shaken ; for which
 End he sought to have winnowed Peter, but Christ
 prevented him, by praying that his Faith should not
 fail. Then they find that made good, which Paul
 asserteth with Confidence, Rom. 8. 35, 37. The holy
 Man, Psal. 73. was sorely assaulted with a Temptation,
 and was almost carried off his Feet, and made
 to turn his Back upon the Way of God ; but yet his
 Root was fixed in the Ground, and he was not blown
 away : And what held him fast ? He saith himself
 when he is come through the Water, Verse 23. Never
~~she~~
~~I am continually with thee, thou hast holden me by my right Hand.~~
 And this did contribute to his more firm
 fixing, as to his Faith and Adherence ; for he crieth
 out immediately, Verses 25, 26. Whom have I in Heaven
 but thee ; and none upon Earth that I desire besides thee : My
 Flesh and my Heart faileth, but God is the Strength of my
 Heart, and my Portion for ever.

5. His Presence maketh, that all the Afflictions
 meet with, sometimes doth not so much Harm to
 them, as marr and impede their spiritual Growth.
 As it doth not break off their Interest, so nor can it
 sometimes so much as wrong their spiritual Condition
 and Frame ; yea it is seen oftentimes, that as their
 State and Interest becometh more fixed, and mani-
 fest ; so their Condition is much bettered thereby
 their heavenly Mindedness, Deadness to the World,
 Spirituality of Frame, Self-denial, &c. grow : Neither
 Fire nor Flame, Waters nor Rivers can part them
 and their Graces : And all this is the Effect of God's
 Presence, taking away the Venom and Poison
 these Evils, and making them wholesome Medicines
 and as fruitful Showers to the chapt Ground, and as
 warm Blinks of the Sun to the cold Earth, whereby
 is made to send forth pleasant and profitable Herbs.
 Hence saith the Apostle, Rom. 5. 3, 4, 5. — we glori-
 us, shall

in Tribulations also, knowing that Tribulation worketh Patience, and Patience Experience, and Experience Hope, and Hope maketh not ashamed. Satan thinks by the Fire of Tribulation, & manifold Temptations to consume the good Metal. But God's Presence turneth it to be but a purging and trying Fire; and this Trial of Faith worketh Patience, James 1. 2, 3, 4.

6. His Presence sometimes so preserveth them in their Trials and Troubles, that their very outward and temporal State and Means is not thereby impaired; they suffer not so much as any Loss or Prejudice therein, whatever their Enemies may design, and they may fear and apprehend. It was no small Affliction for Jacob, to be forced, for Fear of his Brother Esau, to flee out of his Father's House and native Country; and yet that same Affliction did tend to enrich him outwardly; so that, though he went away having nothing but a bare Staff in his Hand, he returned having two Bands; Gen: 32: 10. But what was the Ground of all this? We have it, Gen. 28. 15. And behold, (saith the Lord to him) I am with thee, and will keep thee, in all Places, whither thou goest. Many of the Children of God have found this made good by Experience; that when their Enemies thought to have undone them as to their outward State, and as to their Name and Reputation, the Lord hath spoken with them, that he hath made all the Courses, which the Enemies did take to ruin them, tend to the Increase of their Wealth and to further and advance them, even as to Honour and Credit in a World: Joseph found this made good to him; and so did Daniel.

7. His Presence maketh up to them all their outward Losses of Friends, Accommodations, Relations, and of what they enjoyed with some Pleasure here, when that Word is made good, Mat 19. 29. And every one, that hath forsaken Houses, or Brethren, or Sisters, or Father, or Mother, or Children, or Lands for my Name's sake, shall receive an hundred Fold, and shall inherit ever-

lasting Life. So Luke 18: 29, 30. Verily I say unto you, there is no Man that hath left House or Parents — for the Kingdom of God's Sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present Time. And as Mark hath it, Chap. 10. 30. this hundredfold Fold can even be with Persecution. Now all this Gain and Advantage, all this hundred Fold, which Persecution cannot prejudge them of, cometh in at this Door: His Presence maketh them richer than they would be, if they possessed an hundred Times more than they did lose.

8. His Presence sometimes is such, as at length worketh out their actual Delivery; after he hath supported them all the Time of the Trial, that they did not sink under it. Thus was he present with Joseph, Daniel, and the three Children, and many others; thus did he promise at several Times to deliver Jeremiah, Chap. 1. 8, 19. Be not afraid of their Faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord — and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee? And why so? For I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord. So again, Chap. 15: 20, 21. And I will make thee unto this People a fenced brazen Wall, and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee, for I am with thee to save thee, and to deliver thee, saith the Lord. And I will deliver thee out of the Hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the Hand of the Terrible.

9. His Presence so settleth and composeth their Spirits, that they are without that Perturbation of Mind, that proveth a great Trouble; and are in Case to go about Duty without Fear or Anxiety. Whence it is that for all that Enemies can do, they are kepted in a sweet Christian Frame.

10. Yes, his Presence helpeth them to a joyful Frame of Spirit, to a singing in their Dungeon, as was the Presence of the Lord with the Apostles, that made them rejoice that they were counted worthy to suffer Shame for his Name, Acts 5. 41. and those, that Peter wrote to, did greatly rejoice, 1 Peter 1. 6.

Fourthly, In the last Place, let us see, what Improvement Faith can and may make of this comfortable Consideration, to the End, the afflicted Believer may win to a Life, in the midst of his Affliction. And indeed Faith hath here noble Advantage : For,

I. Faith can hence infer Conclusions, to free the Soul of all base discomposing and distracting Fears, that ordinarily, in a Time of Trouble, seize upon the afflicted. *David*, when he had gotten a Proof of God's Goodness before, and of his Presence with him, and had now got his Faith fixed, he busheth all Fears to the Door, and in a Manner defyeth them, *Psal. 27. 1.*
The Lord is my Light and my Salvation, whom shall I fear.
The Lord is the Strength of my Life, of whom shall I be afraid? See also what followeth: As if he had said, come what Afflictions can come, I will not be afraid, for the Lord, as he hath been, so he will be, present with me, as a Light and as Salvation. So when *Jacob* heard, that *Esau* was coming to meet him with four hundred Men, he was greatly afraid and distressed, *Gen. 32. 6. 7.* but after he had been at his Prayers, the night following, and had a wrestling with one, the Issue was, *Verse 30 Jacob called the Name of the Place Peniel; for (said he) I have seen God Face to Face:* Last was a wonderful Blink of God's Countenance: and what followed? *And my Life is preserved*, said he, which Expression, as it may intimate his present sense of the Mercy, and his heightning of it, in that he had got such a Vision, and was not killed there-with; so it may hold forth his Perswasion through the faith, of his future Deliverance: And thus through God's Presence in *Peniel*, he getteth some more Confidence, and his Fear is abated.

Upon several Accounts. Fear and Dread take hold on People in Time of Affliction; and as to all these, comfort from this Consideration can perpare an Antidote: As

1. When Affliction cometh, they apprehend and fear, their Strength shall fail them, and they shall

not come thorow the Trial, nor be able to ride out the Storm. But Faith from this Consideration can dispel that Cloud, and settle the Soul upon this Ground. Be it so, that thy Strength is weak ; yet thy Second is mighty, there is the Almighty God standing at thy right Hand ; and what hast thou to fear then ? he can bear thee, and thy Burthen both. if everlasting Arms be under, what Burthen can crush thee ? Will he stand by, and see thee sink under the Load ? he is with thee, who alone is thy Strength, and he is able enough to make thee stand.

2. They are afraid, that the Trouble shall prove a growing Trouble, and shall not end in Haste, but be like a feeding, growing Storm, and so prove the longer the more insuperable ; and consequently insupportable. But Faith, from this Consideration of God's Presence, can fix the Heart against that Fear, and cause the Soul sing and say, If God be with me, it is no Matter how long the Trouble continue ; let it grow as it will, his Presence will prevent all Danger, & countervail all Damage, and preserve me from Hurt.

3. They are afraid, they shall not get new and fresh Supplies from Heaven, according as their Necessity requireth ; whereby it will come to pass, that at length they shall faint and succumb. But Faith improving this Consideration, rationally secureth them as to this, where God is present, there is Strength enough. He strengtheneth with Strength in the Soul ; his Presence hath all Strength necessary with it. He is present that everlasting Arms may be under ; if the Sun be arisen in our Horizon, there will be Influences of Light and Warmth flowing therefrom. This Fear then will no trouble the Soul, that hath the Faith of this Truth. Such will be in Case to say, Though I walk through the valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, Psal. 23. 4.

4. They are afraid that Enemies shall prevail to length, and they shall lose Courage and faint ; and then be so the Enemies shall rejoice and triumph. But a Sigh

of this by Faith, will make them say with Jeremiah Chap. 20. 11. But the Lord is with me, as a mighty terrible One; therefore my Persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: They shall be greatly ashamed, for they shall not prosper; and their everlasting Confusion shall never be forgotten.

5. They are afraid that God shall not be well pleased with their Persons; and so their Sufferings shall not advantage their Souls Welfare: But when Faith improveth this Promise, the Believer may conclude with himself, that his Person is, and shall be accepted, and that it shall go well with him for ever; for were he none of God's, he would get none of his special Presence. The Lord is only present with his own, that he may carry them thorow all Dangers and Difficulties, and land them safe above.

6. They are afraid, that they shall miscarry in their Sufferings, some Way or other, and so dishonour the Lord, and offend the Generation of God's Children, and wrong the Cause. But the Sight of this by faith scattereth this Cloud of Fear; for where the presence of the Lord is, there are his Light and his Truth, two sure Guides to lead them, *Psal. 43. 3.* He is a Light and will be their Light, *Psal. 27. 1.* And in his Light, they will see Light, *Psal. 36. 9.* His Countenance hath a Light with it, and a Light herein they may walk, *Ps. 89. 15.* and by this Light, they may get a Sight of their Interest in Christ, so they may see their present Duty, and get Strength hereby to do their Duty; for his Presence hath strength with it.

Thus we see the improving by Faith of the promised Presence of God, would have this noble Advantage and Effect, that it would free the Believer of those disquieting and distempering Fears, to which they are obnoxious, in an evil Day. Yea from this consideration, the Lord presseth his People to lay aside all base unworthy, slavish and carnal Fear: as we see, *Isai. 41. 10, 13.* Fear thou not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, &c. Two Expressions to the same Purpose, shewing that the right Improvement

of this Promise would and should banish away all
Sorts and hurtful Degrees of this evil of Fear. Yea
we see, Verse 13. That God's Presence with his People,
upholding them with his mighty Powre, hath a Voice
with it, saying, *Fear not.* So again, Chap. 43. 1, 2.

2. Faith can improve this Consideration, for sup-
porting the Soul, and keeping it from sinking under
the Burden, through Discouragement and Despon-
dency of Spirit: For Faith can reason thus, Is it
not a shame for such, as have such royal, such neces-
sary and such useful Company, to be heartless in a
Day of Adversity? It is true, as we said above, the
Lord may be present with Life and supporting Strength,
and yet so hide himself, as the Believer shall not be
sensible of his Presence, nor feel it, in such a Man-
ner or Measure, as he fain would: Yet the Believer
is called to set Faith on this Promise, though Sense be
not satisfied, and by Faith draw Encouragement
from this Consideration for his Establishment, and
against Sense believe; and thence he may chide him-
self for, and shame himself from his Discouragement
and say to his Soul, *Why art thou cast down. O my Soul:*
And why art thou disengaged within me? Have I not ex-
cellent Company with me, while I am here in a
Strange and solitary Place, in a Prison, in a Furnace
of Affliction? Have I not the Son of God with me?

3. The Consideration and Faith of this Truth, that
God is with his People in their Trials, should ani-
mate and encourage them unto Duty, even when
they see, that Hazard and Inconveniences attend the
Faithful Discharge of such a Duty: For the Presence
of God is enough to strengthen a Man against all Op-
position, and to carry him through all Dangers, Di-
ficulties, and Hardships, that can follow him, in the
following of Duty. What Damage can make them
Losers, who enjoy the Presence of God? When Jacob
was going down to Egypt, to his Son Joseph, he could
not but apprehend both Dangers and Inconveniences
in the Way: But when the Lord appeared to him,

and made him this Promise, Gen. 46. 4. — I will go down with thee, all envanished. Moses saw many Difficulties and Dangers, that he was to meet with, in going into Pharaoh to seek Liberty for the People of Israel: But this was an Antidote against all, Exod. 3. 12. — Certainly I will be with thee. Jeremiah was put upon a Piece of hard Service, when he was ordained to be a Prophet to the Nations; and he could not but apprehend much Danger, in the Discharge of that Office: But the Lord giveth him this, to fortify him against all, Jeremiah 1. 8, Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee.

4. The Faith of this would certainly help us to walk under the Cross rejoicingly; and would prove a Welspring of Consolation to us. If the Lord of Hosts be with us, why may we not rejoice, though the Earth should be removed, and the Mountains be hurried into the midst of the Sea? May not this be as a River whose Streams shall make glad the City of God? Should not the Faith of this so sweeten all their outward carriage, may shew forth the inward Joy and Gladness of their Heart? I have set the Lord always before me, because he is at my right hand (said David, Psal. 16. 8.) I shall not be moved: and what then? Therefore (Verse 9.) my Heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth, &c.

5. The Faith of this would strengthen our Hope and Confidence, that we should be no losers by the affliction, this being one End of his Presence with this People in their Trials and Distresses, to end it, that they may be kept harmless and unhurt by all that befall them. And seeing it is so, that we receive the Promise of his Presence, and thereby Ground Assurance, that all shall be well, why are we not more quieted in our own Minds, and rest not more in hope, that all shall turn about to the best, even when the Day is at the darkest, and all look most dismal?

6. The Consideration of this sweet and refreshing truth, that the Lord is with us, standing by us, in all our Afflictions and Trials, should move us unto an

holy, watchful, and tender Walk in our Sufferings; lest the holy God, who is looking on, be provoked to Anger by our Miscarriages, & to withdraw his gracious Presence, and leave us to our selves. When the holy One of Israel is standing by us, and looking on us, and taking notice of all our Deportment, how careful should we be, that we stir not up his Anger and Jealousy against us, by our wearying, quarrelling, fretting, hearkning to sinful Motions, or using undue Means for our Outgate: For then we provoke him to leave us alone: And wo unto us, when we are alone in such a Day.

7. The Consideration of this should ease our Minds, and free us of many perplexing Thoughts and Cares, that may, at such a Time, throng in upon us; as what shall we answer, when such or such intangling Questions are proposed to us? What shall we do, when such a Difficulty rencontereth us? How shall we carry, when under such a Temptation? For hereby we may have a satisfying Answer to all these. Why? The Lord is with us, and we have no more to do, but to cast all our Care on him, and to roll all these Difficulties on him according to that Command, 1 Pet. 5. 7. *Casting all your Care upon him, for he careth for you:* And if he care for us, he loveth to have us easing our selves of our Loads, and giving him a Lift; yea the more we roll upon him the better: He will take it best, if we roll the Whole upon him. Thus should we commit our Way unto the Lord, Psal. 73. 5. and cast our Burden upon him, Psal. 55. 22. and he will take it as a Gift for so the Word importeth. And shall he stand by us waiting for a Gift from us, and for such a Gift that would be so easing unto our selves, and shall he not have it?

8. The Faith of this Presence of God with us, in Affliction, would free us of that disquieting Thought that proveth most troublesome and provoking to wit, That the Lord considereth not, taketh no notice of, and weigheth not our Affliction, and the

our Way is hid from the Lord. *Isai. 40. 27.* for then we would be far from having such Thoughts ; he, whona we look upon as present with us, in all our Afflictions, could not be thought to be a stranger to our sufferings. We might then see Ground of Assurance and Perswasion, that he were acquainted with every Circumstance and Ingredient, in our Trouble, and with every Instrument and Measure of it : And this would quiet and compose our Spirits, knowing that he will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able ; nor lay more upon us, than he knoweth we are able to stand under.

9. The Faith of this would give Ground of Hope of an Outgate, in his good Time. It is said of Zion, *Psal. 46. 5.* God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved : And what then ? What will become of her when she cometh into Trouble ? God shall help her, and that right early. So *Zeph. 3. 17.* The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty, he will save. Deliverance is a kindly native Fruit and Effect of God's Presence with his People, in the Time of their Affliction. Paul found this in his Experience, when he was listed before Nero, *Nevertheless the Lord stood with me, (2 Tim 4. 12)* And what followed upon that ? And I was delivered out of the Mouth of the Lion. This is fully confirmed, *Jer. 30. 10, 11. and 46. 28, 29.* Therefore fear thou not, O my Servant Jacob, saith the Lord ; neither be dismayed, O Israel, For Lo I will save thee from afar, and thy Seed from the Land of their Captivity ; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid : For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee.

10. Lastly, From this Consideration, Faith may safely infer, that the Church, and every true Believer, as Parts and Members thereof, shall be freed from Ruin and Destruction. The Lord's Presence with them doth completely secure them; as to this. So that whatever the Thoughts of their own Weakness, Inability, and Fearfulness ; or the Consideration of Enemies Rage, Barbarity, Cruelty, or Craftiness and Wiles,

Wiles, may seem to say, or give Ground to fear; yet his Presence will make all safe, the End shall be Salvation; for he will not make a full end of them, but correct in Measure, as we see in the forecited Passages, Jeremiah 30, 11, and 46: 29.

CHAP. VII.

CONSIDERATION II.

Christ's Sympathy with his People in their Afflictions.

IT is no small Ease to an hurt or wounded Child, when the Mother taketh him up in her Lap, and crieth, *Wo's me for my hurt Child,* and bloweth upon the Sore: This is half healing to the poor Child. It must likewise be a great Ease and Refreshment, to an afflicted and persecuted Child of God, to know that tender hearted Christ is sympathizing with them in his Sufferings, and is, as it were, taking him up in his Arms, and putting him in his Bosom, and saying, *Wo's me for my dear Child! who hath hurt you?* And thus making as heavy a Moan as he himself can do, and weeping to hear him cry, and sighing to hear him groan. The Consideration therefore of this Particular cannot but be refreshing and strengthening unto the afflicted and persecuted Child of God; and be good cheer for Faith to feed upon, in Order to Life, in a Day of deep Distress.

That we may in some Measure make this plain, We shall, 1. Confirm the Truth of this; that Christ is sympathizing with his People in their Afflictions. 2. Shew some Grounds of this Sympathy. 3. Take

notice

notice of some Properties of it. 4. Mention som^e Effects of it. And 5. Point forth some Ways, how it may be improven to good Advantage.

As to the First, The Truth of this is clear from these Passages of Scripture. 1. *Isai: 63: 9.* In all their Affliction, he was afflicted. Who is this he, who was afflicted with them, in all their Afflictions? Even he, who, Verse 3. is said to have trode the Wine-press his alone. 2. *Judges 10: 16.* — His Soul was grieved for the Misery of Israel. This must be a remarkable Thing, that God's Soul should be said to be thus grieved, shortned or straitned for his Peoples Misery: And certainly it speaketh out great Pity and Compassion, and a strong Sympathy, and is like the Sympathy of a tender-hearted Mother, whose Heart is bleeding and breaking for Grief, at the Pains and Sores of her tender and dearly beloved Child. 3. *Zeck. 2: 8.* For he that toucheth you toucheth the Apple of his Eye. Is there any Member of a Man's Body more tender, than the Apple of the Eye, that cannot endure the least Mote or Dust? But how will a Man be affected, moved and pained, when that is touched or wounded? Must not then this Sympathy be real, when every Touch they meet with at the Hands of Enemies, soundeth and affecteth Christ, as really as a Man would be affected, if any Thing touched his Eye, yea the Apple of his Eye? 4. *A&E: 9: 4; Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* A wonderful Expression: Whom was Saul then persecuting? Whom but the Disciples of Christ; and this Christ accounteth a persecuting himself; as if he had felt every Blow, ev-ry Whip, every Injury, they were put to suffer. 5. The Mention we find made of the Bowels of God towards his People, will speak out this Compassion and Sympathy, *Isai: 63: 15:* — Where is thy Zeal, and thy Strength, and the sounding of thy Bowels, and of thy Mercies towards us? *Psal: 25: 6:* Remember O Lord thy tender Mercies, or thy Bowels, as it is in the Original. So *Jeremiah 31: 20.* — Therefore my Bowels are troubled for him; spoken by

by the Lord of penitent *Ephraim*. It is true, this Word includeth also Pity; but that doth contribute to clear the Truth of what is now under Consideration.

As to the Second Particular, The Grounds of this Sympathy; we shall mention some few, whereby we may be helped to know something of the Nature thereof: As

1. As Christ is God, and so intimately acquainted with, and privy to all the Miseries and Afflictions of his People, seeing nothing can be hid from him, nor an evil Word spoken against his People; nay, nor a Thought, Device or Purpose of Evil against them, can be concealed from him, who understandeth the Thoughts afar off, *Psal:* 139: 2, 3, 4: So he is true Man, having a true humane Nature; for he was made like unto us in all Things, except Sin; and so must have a natural kindly Touch and Feeling of the Evils we suffer; as one Man hath of the Evils, which another Man suffereth, more than an Angel can have, or a Man can have of the Sufferings of a Beast; for these are not of the same kind and Nature. Now it is said of Christ, that he took not on him the Nature of Angels, but he took on him the Seed of Abraham, *Heb:* 2: 16. and again, in all Things, he was made like unto his Brethren, that he might be a merciful high Priest, Ver. 17. and then followeth, Ver. 18: for in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. So Chap: 4: 15: for we have not an high Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our Infirmitie, but was in all Points tempted, like as we are without Sin. By Virtue of his true humane Nature, he hath kindly, and natural feeling of our Miseries, as one Man will have of the Miseries of another.

2. Yet further, he is a Man, that was experimentally acquainted with our Griefs and Sorrows; and this is a further Ground of Sympathy; as a Man who hath known in Experience, and felt the Pain of the Gout or Stony Gravel, hath a more kind Sympathy with another Man under these Pains and Torments, than another can have, who never did feel these Pains. Now our Lord Jesus was

man of Sorrows and acquainted with Grief, *Isai: 53: 3:* He knew what it was to be cold, hungry, thirsty, weary, and what it was to be buffeted, spit upon, beaten, wounded, slandered, called a Glutton and Wine-slobber, a Traitor, to be cast in Prison, impaneled before unrighteous Judges, to be accused, falsely condemned, and to be put to Death: And upon this account, he is the more able to sympathize with such, as are put to suffer such Things; for he was made like unto his Brethren, that he might be a merciful High Priest, *Heb: 2: 17:* And he was made like unto his Brethren, in that he suffered, *Verse 18:* and upon the Account of his Suffering, being tempted, he is said to be able to succour those who are tempted: And ever sure, he was able before; but not in such a special sympathizing Manner: He had hereby, as to this special Manner, a new Aptitude and Ability. He was in all Things tempted like as we are, and therefore can in a special Manner be touched with the feeling of our Infirmities, having had an experimental Knowledge and Acquaintance with our Infirmities and Temptations.

3: We would consider how nearly he is related to us; and this will help us to see a further Ground of his Sympathy.

1: He is our Brother, *Heb: 2: 11, 12, 14:* For both he who sanctified, and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which Cause he is not ashamed to call them Brethren, saying, *I will declare thy Name unto my Brethren.* — for as much then, as the Children are Partakers of Flesh and Blood, so also himself likewise took Part of the same. Now a Brother can sympathize more kindly with another Brother in Adversity, than a Stranger can do. Men of one Nation will more kindly and warmly join with other, and take Part with other, when wronged by any in a strange Place, than Men of different Nations will.

2: He is our King, and a native King that is tender-hearted and kindly, will be much more affected

ted with the Miseries of his Subjects, than with the Miseries and Sufferings of those of another Nation to whom he hath not that Relation: They are his Subjects, and therefore their Sufferings affect and pierce him more; as we see in David, when he saw the Sword of the Lord drawn forth against them, 1 Chron. 21: 17: *As for those Sheep, (said he) what have they done? Let thine Hand be upon me.*

3. He is our *high Priest*, and the high Priest by Office was to be a Sympathizer with the People, whom he was to represent, and for whom he was to appear before God, for he was to carry their sins with him in before the Lord: He was ordained for Men in Things pertaining to God, that he may off'r both Gifts and Sacrifices for Sins; who can have Compassion on the Ignorants, and on them that are out of the Way, for that he himself also is compassed with Infirmitie, Heb: 5: 1, 2. And therefore Christ the *high Priest*, and the *high Priest* of our Profession, Heb: 3: 1: and 4: 14: is not one that cannot be touched with the feeling of our Infirmitie, Heb 4: 15.

4. He is our *Husband*, which further cleareth up and confirmeth the Sympathy: For a loving, kind, and tender hearted Husband, cannot but be piercingly affected with the Pains, Dolors, Griefs and Miseries, that he knoweth his Wife to be under; her Groans cannot but go thorow his Heart. Now Christ is the Church's Husband, and she his Spouse; and therefore her Miseries must go near his Heart. Men should love their Wives, as their own Bodies, he that loveth his Wife, loveth himself: For no Man ever yet hated his own Flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it; even as the Lord the Church: For this Cause shall a Man leave his Father and Mother, and shall be joined to his wife, and they two shall be one Flesh, Ephes: 5: 29, 30, 31.

5. He is our *Head*, and is so called in that, Ephes: 5: cited, and elsewhere: Now every one knoweth, that the Head cannot but sympathize with the least Member of the Body, that is suffering, were it but a Finger

or a Toe. The Pain of the least Member of the Body affecteth both Heart and Head.

6. He is the *Captain of our Salvation*, Heb. 2. 10. Which also speaketh out this Sympathy, seeing we know, Captains and Officers use to take Injuries and Affronts done to their Soldiers, as done to themselves, and cannot but resent the Wrongs they suffer.

7. He is our *Lord Redeemer*, who hath redeemed the Church with his own Blood: For she is not redeemed with corruptible Things, as Silver and Gold; but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb, without Blemish, and without Spot, 1 Pet. 2. 18, 19. &c. 20. 28. And sure a Ransomer, who hath purchased any Persons to himself, at such a Rate, will be most tender of them, and will not take it well, that any wrong them; yea he will have another Touch of Grief and inward Sorrow, at their Sufferings, than others can have; because of his Interest in them, and Relation to them.

Christ then being our Lord Redeemer, Captain of salvation, high Priest, King, Brother, Husband and Head, cannot but have a strong Sympathy, with his suffering Relations and Members. He is near of Kin to them, of their Flesh and Bones, and then hath personally an experimental Knowledge and Feeling of these Evils himself, in his own true Body of Flesh and Blood.

4. The more to clear and confirm this Sympathy, we would consider the near and close Union, that is betwixt Christ and his People. Many Similitudes are used in Scripture to point this forth; but yet it must be acknowledged that they come all far short in expressing the Closeness of this Union: He is one with them, as a King or Head of a Commonwealth is one politically with the Politick-body, or the Head of a Family, one with the Economick Body. He is one with them, as the Husband is one with the Wife in Marriage Union; so that as Man and Wife become one Flesh; so Christ and Believers become one Spirit:

Spirit : He is one with them as the natural Head is one with the natural Body, or as the Vine-tree is one with the Branches. Job. 15. but all these put together in one cannot sufficiently express, and make us understand the close Union, that is betwixt Christ and Believers : The Scripture tells us of their being mutually in other. They dwell in other, he in them, and they in him, Job. 6. 56. 1 Job. 3. 24: and 4. 13, 16. They abide in other, he in them, and they in him, Job. 15. 5. This then must be the Ground of a wonderful Sympathy : When two are so near to other, that they are in one another, can the one be hurt, & the other not smart and suffer? As there is nothing in Nature, that can represent this mutual In-being to the Life; so there can be no Sympathy, that is founded upon Union in Nature, that can resemble this, and clearly represent it.

5. If we should add to these Grounds this Consideration, That their Sufferings were upon his Account, the Sympathy could not but be more manifest, and clear : For if one should be put to suffer, upon the Account of another, the other could not but resent it, and have a Sympathy with the Sufferer, even though he were a stranger ; much more, if he were related to him, his Acquaintance, his intimate Friend, his Brother ; and yet more, the Man would sympathize with his Wife, if she were under hard Sufferings for his Sake, and for Fidelity and Love to him. And may we not have Ground to suppose, yea and to rest perswades, that Christ must be in another Manner affected, and must in another Manner sympathize with his near and dear Relations, when they are put to suffer hard Things upon his Account, and for their Love and Faithfulness to him, and his Cause and Interest ? Sure we may.

Asto the Third Particular, which falleth next under Consideration, to wit, the Properties of this Sympathy ; we shall satisfy our selves with mentioning a few.

1. This Sympathy is *real*: It is not a mere imaginary Thing, or a Fiction, but a Reality producing real Effects; such as the yearning of inward Bowels, and Compassion, and a Desire of delivering such, towards whom this Sympathy is exercised, out of the said and suffering Condition wherein they are, *Isai. 53. 9. In all their afflictions he was afflicted. But was it nothing else than a painted Fire, having no Heat with it? See what followeth, In his Love, and in his pity, he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the Days of old.* This real Sympathy is accompanied with real moving of Bowels, Compassion, Love, Tenderness and a Desire, yes, and Endeavour after their Deliverance. So that,

2. This Sympathy is *Practical*, pushing to actual appearances, in the Behalf of such as are in Misery: It is not a mere speculative Thing, lying in the Head, but is a Pressure and Weight upon the Heart, paining until the Party sympathized with, be at Freedom.

3. This Sympathy of Christ's is *holy* and *sinless*, without that Mud of Corruption, that is in our Sympathy here below: Ours, by Reason of this Corruption, can miscarry, and degenerate, and may so transort us, as we may do more harm than good: But this is pure, unmix'd, limpid, without all Dregs at the Bottom, and so beyond all Hazard of miscarrying, its Actings and Movings: This surely is comfortable.

4. This Sympathy is accompanied with *Wisdom*; it like unto the fond and foolish Affections and Bowels of Women, that oft do overdrive, and push Courses, that prove rather hurtful, than Advantages to the Person sympathized with. This giveth Security, that his Sympathy will do no Harm.

5. It is a *kindly* Sympathy, it floweth naturally and sweetly, as from the Head, and from the Husband: the Woman's Sympathy with her Child in Hazard, is no forced, constrained Thing; but is a natural, and sweet kindly working of Bowels; as the Mother the Child had a kindly yearning of Bowels to her Child,

Child, when Solomon spoke of dividing it with the Sword.

6. It is a *Lasting Sympathy*, and *Unchangeable*, being the Sympathy of one, who is the unchangeable God. Our Sympathy, as our Affection, can cool and wear out, as spent and exhausted; but it is not so with the Sympathy of our Lord Jesus: As whom he loveth he loveth to the End; so with whomsoever he sympathizeth, with these he sympathizeth to the End. The Mother cannot but continually sympathize with the pained Child, howbeit the Child should carry sometimes very unchild-like, so Christ's Sympathy doth not alter, howbeit his Children sometimes miscarry, & provoke him to Anger. *He bare them and carried them alith Days of old*, Isa. 63. 9. O! how refreshing is this.

7. It is an *Universal Sympathy*; not in one or two Distresses and Dangers, but in all the Afflictions of his People, as that forecited Passage, Isa. 63. 9. clear eth: Yea he sympathizeth with his People in their Afflictions, whether they be sensible of them themselves, or not: As a Mother can never see her beloved Child in Hazard, but her Bowels must yearn even though the Child be apprehensive of no Danger at all.

8. This Sympathy is *strong*; it cannot be extinguished; though a Child hath grievously provoked his Mother to Anger, yet she cannot but have yearning of Bowels and Sympathy, when he falleth in the Fire or in the Water, and is almost destroyed. Nay when the Child's Folly hath so grieved her, that she could not but whip him sore; yet she cannot but be moved at, and affected with his Pain: So albeit Believers have provoked God to send sore Affliction on the Loins; yet he sympathizeth with them in the sufferings, which their own Folly hath brought upon them: As he was afflicted in all the Afflictions of his People in the Wilderness, though they vexed his holy Spirit. *Is Ephraim* (saith the Lord, Jer. 31. 20.) *my dear Son? Is he a pleasant Child?* For since I spake again

I do earnestly remember him still therefore my Bowels troubled, (or Swoon) for him. That is wonderful, which we have, Hos. 11: 7, 8. And my People are bent backsliding from me : Though they called them to the most high; none at all would exalt him. How shall I give thee, Ephraim ? How shall I deliver thee, Israel ? How shall I make thee as Admah ? How shall I set thee as Zeboim ? Mine heart is turned within me, my Repentings are killed together.

9. This Sympathy is Divine, and Heavenly, being the Sympathy of one, who is God ; and therefore incomparably and inconceivably beyond what we can comprehend. The greatest Expression of Sympathy that ever was given by one Man to another, by the most tender hearted Mother towards her tender and beloved Child, is nothing able to give us the true apprehension, and lively Apprehension of this Sympathy of Christ's.

10. It is a Sympathy that is accompanisid with the Almighty Arm of Power to rescue the Person sympathized with : Mother's Bowels may yearn and beweare, till they break again, and yet they cannot help their Poor Child drowning in the Water, something may make it impossible for them to give any Help. But the Sympathy of our God and King is accompanied with irresistible Power ; a Power to which nothing is impossible. O ! how comfortable is this unto his poor People ? And what a Jubile may this raise in their Soul, be their outward Condition what it will? where concerning the Fourth Particular, viz. which is coulde fly to be touched, to wit, the Effects of this moving Sympathy : We need only mention a few, which severall serve to make it appear, what Food Faith may therewithal in this Consideration, for a Life, in a Time of the Sudden Distress and Distress.

This Sympathy as it saith, That Christ is affected with the Condition of his suffering Friends and Followers, as they are themselves ; so it saith, That as we are earnestly desirous of Relief and Deliverance against their Trouble ; so is he : But yet we must conceive

ceive aright of this, and construe all this to be in Way suitable to his now glorified State, and as free of those muddy Passions and Perturbations of Mind that we are subject unto. Our Sympathy would prompt us to act unwisely; but though Christ's Sympathy is real and strong, yet it is wise also, and therefore though he desire the Delivery of his People; yet it is only in his own Way, and in a Way, that will be most for God's Glory, and for their good. Though the wise tender hearted Mother sympathize with the pained Child, and fain would have the Child freed of Pain, yet not in such a Way as may put his Life in Hazard.

2. This Sympathy prompteth the Lord Jesus (if we might speak so) to set about the Way, and Mean of his Peoples Delivery out of Trouble, when it is for his own Glory, and for their real Good. As in their Afflictions of old he was afflicted; so the Angels of his Presence saved them, and in his Pity he pitied them, and deemed them, and bare them, and carried them: Love and Pity set him (to speak so) on Work, to through their Deliverance in his own Way, and Time; who knoweth best when to deliver, and what Way to deliver his People.

3. This Sympathy engageth Christ to take the Part against Enemies, and account the Wrongs done to them, to be done to himself; and to state himself against them, as their Adversaries, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? So Zech: 2: 8: For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, after the Glory, hath he sent me unto the Nations which spoiled you: That is, after I have been authorized and commissionated to punish, at his Direction, own People, who are most dear to him and his Glory; then he sent me unto the Nations, who were Enemies unto his People, to take Vengeance upon them. And why so? For (as it is added) he toucheth you, toucheth the Apple of his Eye: As if he had said, The Lord taketh all the Wrongs, that are due to you, as done to himself: Nay, if the Enemy

but touch you, or spang his Fingers End on you, (as we say) it struck a Knell to his Heart, as if they had struck at the Apple of his Eye.

4. This Sympathy causeth Christ (as we would say) to entertain good Thoughts of them, promise their Safety in their Name; as a tender Mother, when she seeth her Child sore whipped for his Faults, when her Bowels begin to move, she crieth out, *O my child will never do it again.* Thus we find the Lord promising fair in their Name, *Isai. 63: 8: For he said, surely, they are my People. Children that will not lie;* and what followed? *And so he was their Saviour.*

This Sympathy setteth Christ on Work, to intercede for his People at the Father's Hand, *Zech: 1: 12: Then the Angel of the Lord answered and said, O Lord of Hosts, how long wilt thou not have Mercy on Jerusalem, and on the Cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation, those threescore and ten years: And whence did this flow? See ver. 14, 15: Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, I am jealous for Jerusalem, and for Zion with great jealousy; I am very sore displeased with the Heathen that are at ease; for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the Affliction.*

5. This same last Passage sheweth, that this Sympathy will have this Effect, that in the Day when Christ contendeth against the Enemies of his People, dear will they pay for all the Wrongs they have done to them; they shall be called to an Account by all: And though the Lord, in his holy Justice, Displeasure, did make use of them, as a Rod to whip his Children withall, yet they shall be made to account, as going beyond their Commission; as helping forward the Affliction: No that they could do Thing beyond what the Lord gave a providential Commission unto, or did suffer, and wisely order; but this is spoken after the Manner of Men; as if when a Father were angry with his Child, he should say to his Servant, *Him thrust out of Doors;* yet he should take it into his Head to see that Servant misusing the Child, and dealing

too roughly with him, out of a Spirit of Revenge. 7. This Sympathy hath another Effect, that man's Faults are past by : Christ will work their Delivery though there be many Provocations standing in the Way : Christ, out of Love and Sympathy, will bear with many of these ; when the People, in whose Afflictions he was afflicted, *Isai: 63: 9: rebelled and vexed his holy Spirit, Verse 10.* What did he ? Did he give them up ? No, but he remembred the Days of old, and so did he lead his People, to make himself glorious Name, *Verse 14.*

It cannot but be strange, that this should be so ; and yet his People should carry, in their Distress and Affliction, as if there were no such Thing. Alas the Truth is, this is not believed, it is not seen nor considered by Faith. It is a notable Well of Consolation, butt hough it be at Hand, *Hagar-like* they know it not, they see it not ; Sorrow oftentimes so overwhelmeth them, that they cannot look to this, and suck Comfort from it, as they might do, and are allowed to do : If it be enquired, How should, or may this be improved ?

The Answer is the last Particular, which we proposed to speak to, that is, to point out a few Particulars, how Faith can get a Life sucked out of this Consideration. That Christ is suffering and sympathizing with the Children of God, in all their Afflictions ; especially in such, as are for his Sake, and for the Adherence to him and to his Truth, in the worst of their suffering Lot, and to this End, I shall name th-

8. The believing of this Truth would serve much to ease the Soul of the heavy Burthen that lyeth on it. It is a double Load to a poor Creature, to be under so heavy Burthen, and to know of none, that is, taking a Lift with it of the Burthen, were it but by speaking tenderly and sympathizingly to it and of it, and bemoaning its Condition, bewailing and lamenting it. So it giveth some Ease and Relief to such an one to find any sympathizing with him, condoling and lamenting

lamenting his Condition, and softening his Pain, and
Colour with a soft Word, expressing Compassion,
and a suffering with him. And will it not give Ease to
poor Believer to see this, and know it by Faith,
that Christ, the great and exalted King, Prince of
the Kings of the Earth, is taking notice of him in
his Sufferings, louting down to take a Share of his
lot, and a Lift at his Burden ; yea that he carrieth
Brother's Heart, more tender than the Heart of
my Mother, bleeding at his Miseries, pained and
perced with his Afflictions, yearning and moving
with wonderful and inconceiveable Tenderness? What
will ease and support a Believer, wrestling under
heavy Pressures, if the Faith of this do it not ? glori-
fied Jesus, though now exalted in highest Glory, is
really sympathizing with him, and affected with
his Pains and Sufferings, as his own Head or Heart
is, when his Hand or Foot is pained ; or as he him-
self findeth himself to be, when his dear Wife, and
dear Child are in Heart-breaking Pain and Tor-
ment? Do the Cries of his tormented Child or Wife
penetrate, and pierce his very Heart ; and when he hath
found to believe, that as really, though in a more
obvious Manner, than we can apprehend, his Cries,
Sighs, his Sobs pierce, as it were, the Heart of
Jesus ; may not this allay a little his Grief? May
not this be some ease to his Mind, and half Health
of his broken Bones, and to his pained and weary
soul? If thou, O Believer, saw by Faith Christ tak-
ing thee up in his Arms, laying thee in his Bosom,
keeping over thy Tears, blowing upon thy Wounds
and Sores, and saying, Wo's me, my dear Child,
who hath hurt thee? who durst do that to thee?
and kissing thy Sores; would not this make thee
whole and mote? Would not this make thine
affliction light? Yea, would it not make thee for-
get all thy Pain and Trouble, and fall a singing?
Would it not make thee forget thy Sorrow, and fall
out his Neck in Love, blessing him for what is come
H and

and rejoicing that thou art counted worthy to suffice at the Hands of any for his Sake, and to account all but light, that can befall thee for his Sake?

2. The believing of this would answer many trouble some Objections and Doubts. As 1. *Has not the Lord now forgotten me?* Oh not, would the Faith of this say, Can a Woman forget her sucking Child, and her sucking Child crying out of Pain, in her very Ears? Could the Mother of the Child, while standing before Solomon, and hearing him command to divide the Child, and seeing the Sword drawn, forget her Child? when her Bowels were yearning upon the Child? No certainly. How then can Christ forget thee, when his Bowels are yearning upon thee. 2. *Doth the Lord see my Affliction, and every Ingredient in my Distress?* The Faith of this would hush this Doubt to the Door. Can he forget; shall he not know and see that, which he feeleth? When every Ingredient that affected thee stounds his Heart, can he be ignorant of it? But Oh! we fear, say they, He hath cast us out of Doors, and so suffereth any to trample on us, that will. But the Faith of this would answer, That his sympathizing Heart giveth Assurance, that he will call all to an Account, for every Touch of their Fingers; and look on it as a touch of the Apple of his Eye; and he will reckon with them in due Time, as Helpers forward of the Affliction, and as doing what they had no Commission or Warrant for. 4. But alas! say they *It is for our Iniquities:* Yet will the Faith of this say *A Mother must keep still a Mother's Heart, even when she is correcting the Child for his Miscarriages.* 5. But when shall it be at an End? Will he ever rid me of this Trouble? Yes, will the Faith of this say, His suffering with thee in thy Sufferings, will not suffice him to let thee endure more, than thy Strength can bear. And his Compassion and Sympathy is pouing him up, (as we may so speak) to deliver thee, in the Time and Manner, that his Wisdom seeth to be best, as really as the yearning of thy Bowels ever move

hee to rescue thy Child out of the Fire, 6. But I am
so better for all that is come upon me, but rather worse. Yet
the Faith of this will say, That God cannot forget
himself, he knoweth our Mould and Fashion: The
moving of his Bowels will at length put him to take
out Difficulty out of the Way.

3. The believing of this Truth should be an effectual
mean to bring the afflicted Believer unto a sweet
obmission of Spirit, under his Crosses and Afflictions,
to a calm and composed Way of lying under
the Trouble: For a common Soldier will bear his
hardships the better, that he knoweth his General
areth with him in that Lot, and is bearing a Part
of his Burden, and is not insensible thereof; nor un-
concerned therewith. And when this will quiet the
heart of a Soldier, when he findeth that his Com-
mander is compassionating his Misery, and suffering
with him; how much more should this Consideration,
that the great King and Prince of *Israel*, the Captain
of the Hosts of the Lord, is, in a more tender com-
passionate, kindly Manner, sympathizing with his
affltering Members, than one Person can do with an-
other, cause the Soul sit down in Silence, and pos-
it self in Patience, yea, and rejoice in his Lot;
cause of this warm-hearted Sympathizer.

4. The Faith of this would give the Believer full
ground of Perswasion, That Christ hath a tender
affection for him. It is a troubling Temptation
to the Child of God, in a Day of outward Affliction
and Calamity, to have these Thoughts rolling in his
mind, Can it be, that I can be beloved of God, who
Hath so dealt with? Have I a Room in his Affection all this
time? Do not these Dispensations of his speak out Anger a-
gainst me? But the Faith of this, that Christ is sym-
pathizing with the poor Man, and taking a Lift of
Burthen, would calm the Soul, as to this, and
remove this Doubt. When the Jews saw, how
Christ wept over Lazarus, they said, Behold, how
loved him, John 11. 35, 36. and may not the Be-
liever

liver say so also, Behold how Christ loveth me, when he seeth by Faith, That Christ is weeping with him sighing with him, pained with his Trouble, sensible of his Grief ; yea, more sensible thereof, and touched therewith, than his nearest Relation could be. If we saw a Woman making an heavy Lamentation and bitterly crying out for her Child, sick or in Pain, would not every one that saw it, say, O how dearly doth she love that Child ? And may not the Believer say the same of himself ? O ! how doth Christ love me ? Yea, he could not but do it, if he saw and believed this Truth. Is it not manifest then how Faith could suck Life out of this Consideration in the saddest of outward Troubles ?

5. Nay, not only would the Faith of this help a subsisting Life, in Time of Tribulation ; but would also help unto a Life of Joy, and make the Believer hearty and cheerful under the Cross : For it supposable, that a Soul can be dejected, or disengaged, that hath the lively Faith of this ? Who will make his Heart glad, if this do it not, know, that Christ Jesus not only knoweth and acquainted with his Distresses and Trouble ; but also affected therewith, and moved thereat, as even tender-hearted Mother was moved at the Miseries her dear Child ?

6. The Faith of this would fully persuade the Believer, that he should not be destroyed with Rod, that it should do him no Harm, that should not be overcharged. Who would think, the Mother, who was already weeping for her dear Child, and crying out, Wo's me for the heavy Burthen then that is on his Back, would crush the Child with an heavier Burthen ? And shall the Man say, that Christ shall lay more upon him, than he is able to bear, and shall break him in Pieces with his afflictions, when by Faith, he seeth him already sympathizing with him, and crying out, as it were, Wo's me for the Misery of my dear Child ?

7. The Faith of this would cause the Man lift up his Head in Hope; and conclude, That there is Hope in Israel concerning our Matters: He would read upon this Consideration sure Grounds of Hope of an Outgate and Delivery, in God's own time, knowing himself, how his Sympathy and yearning of Bowels would move him to labour, by all Means possible, by Night or by Day, in all Haste, be the Hazard what it will, yes, with the Hazard of his Life, and all he hath, to deliver his tender and beloved Child out of the Enemies Hands, or out of Fire or Water; and how he could not rest night nor Day, nor eat, nor drink, till he had done all he could, and set all others adoing for him, that he could move or prevail with: For from this Sympathy, which is real, strong, kindly, and heavenly, and so, far beyond man's foy Sympathy, he might rationally and with good Ground infer, that Christ will make Heaven and Earth know, how he is grieved for the Miseries of his People, and how his Heart is pierced with their Calamities, and set Heaven and Earth and all Work to relieve his Child; and that Christ is making all the haste he can, (to wit, according to the wise Counsels of his holy Will, who is God over blessed for ever,) and so will come in the very first Minute of the appointed Time, and will delay no longer. The Mother, howbeit her Bowels make great stir within her for the Child, when his Leg broken, yet she will have Patience until it be set right by a skilful Hand; and will suffer the Wound her Child to be searched to the Bottom, howbeit the Child foolishly should think, that she desired that he should be out of Pain: We are foolish and foolishly hasty; but our Lord is wise, and notwithstanding of his Delays, yet the Faith of this, would make the Soul say, Seing I see Christ weeping (as it were) and making ado for me, I shall shortly in this Condition, beyond the best Time; he will save me, and that right early: And this could

not but cause the Soul sit down and enjoy the Life of Patience with Hope ; and be far from saying, He hath cast me off ; he will look no more after me, nor once inquire, How it is with me. Yea this would sharpen the Sight of the Believer, and cause him see Christ coming, riding upon the Wings of the Wind, skipping over the Mountains of Bitterness, as a Roe and a young Hart ; because his Bowels are moved, and are yearning upon me, I know then, he will not stay ; therefore will I wait for him, for he that he will come, shall come, and will not tarry.

8. It is a great Advantage to a Believer, wrestling with Tribulations, Temptations, and Afflictions, to know, that they have an open Door and Access unto the Throne of Grace, through Jesus Christ. Now the Faith of this Truth, that Christ is sympathizing with them in all their Afflictions, taketh away all Hinks and Jealousies ; as to this they cannot now doubt, but Christ will make them welcome, come when they will ; when they see, how he is lamenting their Case, condoling their Misery, afflicted with theirs Sufferings ; they are sure, he will not keep them at the Door ; nay, they may be persuaded then, that the yearning of his Bowels, and his Sympathy hath set him, as it were, to his Work of interceding with the Father for them, before they could speak for themselves. When a Child seeth the Mother weeping for his Pain and Hurt, he can come to her Bosom with Confidence, and tell her all that aileth him, and will not fear, that she will shoo him away ; the Sight of her Sympathy emboldened and heartneth him to come, even though he be conscious of many Faults ; so the Child of God, though Conscience of Guilt do much stare him in the Face, yet, seeing this Sympathy of Christ's will him by Faith, he can take Boldness, and lay out all his Case before him, and complain of all the Wrongs Indignities, Affronts done by Enemies to his Person, Name, or Goods ; and thus pour forth

his Soul in the Lord's Bosom, with great Delight, Confidence and Satisfaction. It is no small Advantage for the Believer, to know that he hath an high Priest, that can be touched with the feeling of his Infirmities, and was in all Points tempted, as he is, but without Sin, Heb. 4. 15. He may come boldly into the Throne of Grace, that he may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in Time of Need, Verse 16,

C H A P. VIII.

CONSIDERATION III.

*The Lord's assuming to himself the Stile
of a Redeemer.*

As the Name of the Lord is a strong Tower, to which the righteous run, and are safe; so the Lord doth purposely take to himself such Names and Titles, as may give his People Ground of Hope, in evil Time, and of Encouragement to run to him in their Strait. We shall at this Time only consider this Title of a Saviour, or Redeemer, that we may hence see what Faith can draw from this, in Order to a safe, in a Time of sore Oppression and Bondage. When the Lord is speaking to his People, under these Names, he holdeth forth himself under the most comfortable and Heart-strengthening Notions; and among others, under this of being a Deliverer and Redeemer; and as he proclaimeth himself under these Names; so his People lay hold by Faith on this Name, and on the Relation signified thereby, for their Encouragement, and Comfort, in their Distresses; whence it is manifest, That Faith can suck

Life and Strength from this, in a dead-like Time.
We shall therefore, in Order to the clearing up of
this Ground of Faith, briefly propose some Particu-
lars considerable to this End.

1. We find the Lord, upon the Ground of his
being a Redeemer to his People, comforting them
in their Troubles and Afflictions, and exhorting
them to take Courage to themselves, in the mean
Time, and so to live, *Isai. 43. 14, 19.* *Thus saith the*
Lord, your Redeemer, the holy One of Israel, for your Sake,
I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their
Nobles, and the Caldeans, whose Cry is in the Ships. &c.

— Behold I will do a new Thing; now it shall spring
forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a Way in
the Wilderness, and Rivers in the Deserts, &c. He hold-
eth forth here a sweet Promise unto them, to com-
fort them against the evil Day; and to assure them
of the Truth of the Thing, he speaketh of it part-
ly as done already: And to the End they might
comfort themselves, in the sure Hope and Expec-
tation of it, and needed not make any Question of
the Matter, he giveth them this Ground, Title and
Stile to feed upon, *Thus saith the Lord your Redeemer*
the Lord Jehovah, who is ingaged unto you, and
standeth in the Relation of a Redeemer unto you. He
speaketh thus; and therefore you need not question
or doubt of the Truth of it, but live in Hope
that the Day of Delivery shall dawn in due Time.
As also in the Beginning of that same Chapter, he
thus bespeaketh them by his Prophet; But now the
saith the Lord, that created thee, O Jacob; and he ob-
formed thee, O Israel, fear not, for I have redeemed the
&c. and again Verse 1. For I am the Lord, thy God, the
Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour, I gave Egypt for thy
Ransom, Ethiopia, and Seba for thee. And upon this
followeth Verses 5, 6. Fear not, for I am with thee,
I will bring thy Seed from the east, and gather thee from
the west, I will say to the North, Give up, and to the South,
Keep not back: Bring my Sons from far, and my Daugh-
ters from near.

from the Ends of the Earth. So that he would have them possessing their Souls in Patience, without Fear, or Trouble; because he was related to them, as their Redeemer, and w^ould be to them to the Life, whatever that Name, or Relation did import. So likewise, Isai. 44. 6. Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts, &c. and what followeth upon this? See Verse 8. Fear ye not, neither be ye afraid. He would have them resting, in full Confidence and Assurance, that he would be as good as his Word; because of this his Relation unto them; and therefore upon this Ground, he would have them comforting themselves under all their Distress, and shaking off all disquieting and discomposing Fears. So Isai. 54. 4. Fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed; neither be thou confounded, for thou shalt not be put to shame; for thou shalt forget the shame of thy Youth, and shalt not remember the Reproach of thy Widowhood any more. And what is given for the Ground of all this? For (saith the Verse 5.) thy Maker is thine Husband, the Lord of Hosts is his Name, and thy Redeemer, the holy One of Israel, the God of the whole Earth shall he be called. See also, Isai. 41. 14. and 44. Verse 24. &c.

2. We find the Lord, upon this Ground, in plain terms assuring them of a Delivery out of their misery and Thraldom, Isai. 49. 24, 25, 26. Shall the Prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful Captive delivered? But thus saith the Lord, even the Captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the Prey of the Terrible shall be delivered; for I will contend with him, that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy Children. And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own Flesh, and they shall be drunken with their own Blood, as with sweet wine: And all Flesh shall know, that I the Lord, am thy Saviour and Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob. He promised to bring about such a remarkable and signal delivery, as should cause all On-lookers, and all that heard thereof, say and see, That he was related to them; and particularly, that he stood in the

Relation of a Saviour, and of a Redeemer unto them : And therefore the Consideration of this might have settled them in Hope, and quieted them in the assured Expectation that an Outgate would come. A great and wonderful Delivery is promised, *Isai.* 60, from the Beginning, and same is at large branched forth, in its many and sweet Ingredients, and Attendants ; and among other Things it is promised, *Verse 14.* That the Sons of those that afflicted them should come bending unto them ; and all that despised them should bow themselves down at the Soles of their Feet ; and that they should be called the City of the Lord, the Zion of the holy One of Israel : Yes, and *Verse 15.* should be made an eternal Excellency, a joy of many Generations. And what is the Ground of all ? And thou shalt know, (*Verse 16*) That I the Lord am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob. As if he had said, I shall then give a Demonstration of that Relation, I stand in unto you ; and shall to your own Conviction set the Part of a Saviour and of a Redeemer, and give full Proof of my being the same, that may Stile importeth. So *Jer. 50. 34* *35.* Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the Children of Israel and the Children of Judah were oppressed together, and a that took them Captives, held them fast, they refused to them go : Their Redeemer is strong, the Lord of Hosts is his Name, he shall thorowly plead their Cause, that he may give rest to the Land, and disquiet the Inhabitants Babylon. He would assuredly plead their Cause, seeing he was their Redeemer. There is Food there for Faith in an evil Time. *Zeck. 10. 8.* will kiss for them (that is, the House of Judah and the House of Joseph, and of Ephraim, *Verse 6. 7.*) and gat them, for I have redeemed them, and they shall increase, as the have increased. So *Jer. 31. 10, 11.* He that scattered Israel will gather him and keep him, as a Shepherd doth his Flock. And what Ground is there for this ? For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the Hand him, that was stronger than he.

3. We find the Saints receiving their Mercies and Outgates from him, as such an one, and acknowledging him to be such, and praising him as such, upon the account of their Deliveries; so that their Outgates and Deliverances were Confirmations to them of this standing Relation, and of the Lord's answering this Stile, *2 Sam. 22. 2. 3. Psal. 18. 2.* When David was delivered out of the Hand of all his Enemies, and out of the Hand of *Saul*, then did he sing this Song. "The Lord is my Rock and my Fortress and my Deliverer. The God of my Rock, in him will I trust: He is my Shield, and the Horn of my Salvation, my high Tower and my Refuge, &c. So *Psal. 59. 16. 17.* But I will sing of thy Power, yea I will sing aloud of thy Mercy, in the Morning; for thou hast been my Defence and Refuge in the Day of my Trouble. Unto thee, O my Strength, will I sing; for God is my Defence, and the God of my Mercy, *Psal. 144. 1.* Blessed be the Lord, my Strength, which teacheth mine Hands to War, and my Fingers to Fight. But whence came all this? Verse 2. "He is my Goodness, and my Fortress, my high Tower; my Deliverer, and my Shield: See *Exod. 15. 13.*

4. We find the Saints, in a Time of Affliction and Trouble, eyeing this, and improving it unto the strengthening of their Faith, in their Addresses to God by Prayer, *Psal. 17. 7.* *Shew thy marvellous loving-kindness: And what is the Argument he useth? O! these* *savest, by thy right Hand, them which put their Trust* *in thee, from those that rise up.* He fixeth upon this, that the Lord was such a Saviour, as had this for his Work and Office, to save such as trust in him. *Psal. 40. 17.* *But I am poor and needy, the Lord thinketh upon me; thou art my Help and my Deliverer;* make carrying. O my God. So also *Psal. 70. 5.* She like we find *Isai. 63. 15, 16.* *Lord look down from Heaven* (with the Church) *and behold from the Habitation of* *Holiness, and of thy Glory, &c.* And what Argument

ment is used? Among others this is used, in the following Words. "Thou O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer; thy Name is from everlasting; Or as it is in the Margin, "Our Redeemer from everlasting is thy Name. That is thy Stile and Title, and we plead with thee upon this Account, that thou wouldest answer thy Name, *Jeremiah* also pleadeth after this Manner, *Jeremiah* 14. 8. "O the Hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof in Times of Trouble, why shouldest thou be, as a Stranger in the Land, &c.

5. Yea we find the Lord assuming this Stile unto himself, as his Prerogative Royal, as that, which is due to him alone, and in the Glory whereof none ought to share with him, *Isai. 43. 11.* "I, even I, am the Lord, and beside me there is no Saviour. And again, *Isai. 45. 21* — "no God else beside me, a just God, and a Saviour; none beside me. Sure then, this must be a firm Bottom to stand upon; for if this be his Prerogative Royal, he will, in his Appearances for his People, answer the same: And prove that he is as good as his Title.

6. Yea, upon this Ground, we find him putting People to this Duty of looking to him, and expecting all their Outgates and Deliverances from him. For immediately after that he had asserted, that he was a just God and a Saviour, and none else, *Isai. 45. 21.* He subjoineth, *Verse 22.* "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the Ends of the Earth; for I am God and there is none else. Salvation and Redemption must come that Way, or no Way; and if they be a looking unto him, as the alone Saviour, Salvation will come; their looking shall not be in vain.

7. Upon a right Sight of this, we find that the People of God have triumphed over their Enemies having seen their Ruin as a necessary Result in Consequence hereof, *Isai. 47. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.* "Come down and sit in the Dust, O Virgin Daughter Babylon, sit on the Ground — for thou shal-

no more be called tender and delicate. Take the Milstones and grind meal — thy Nakedness shall be uncovered. And the Reason was, The Lord would take Vengeance, and would not meet them as a Man. And whereupon was all this founded? See Verse 4. " As for our Redeemer the Lord of Hosts is his Name, the holy One of Israel. They had such an Interest in, and Relation unto the Lord, as their Redeemer; and therefore they might well infer as Verse 5. " Sit thou silent, and get thee into Darkness, O Daughter of the Caldeans; for thou shalt no more be called the Lady of Kingdoms. We find David likewise, as it were, defying all Trouble, upon this Account, *Psal. 27. Verses 1, 2, 3.* So *Psal. 94. 22, 23.* ' The Lord is my Defence, and my God is the Rock of my Refuge. And what then? " And he shall bring upon them (that is the Enemies, that sat upon the Throne of Iniquity and condemned innocent Blood, *Verses 20, 21*) " their own Iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own Wickedness; yea the Lord our God shall cut them off.

From all which we see, how Faith may get a Life, in the worst of Times, by feeding on such a Ground of Hope, Comfort, Joy and Strength, as this is. We may see also the rich and noble Advantage, that the redeemed People of the Lord have, who have such a Relation to, and Interest in this Lord Ransomer and Redeemer, whose sole Prerogative it is, to be the Saviour of his People; and who will own that Title in Deed and in Reality, and prove himself to be such in Truth; for whatever Sorrow they may be under here for a Time, and whatever Bondage, Hardship and Slavery, they may be put to suffer; yet their Redeemer liveth, and the Lord of Hosts is Name. This bare up Job's Heart under all his Pressures, Inward and Outward. " I know, That my Redeemer liveth, *Job 19. Verse 25.* There is a Day coming, when the redeemed of the Lord

Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting Joy upon their Head, they shall obtain Gladness and Joy, and Sorrow and mourning shall flee away, *Isai.* 35: 9; and 51: 11. The Year of the Lord's redeemed will come, *Isai.* 63: 4, and that will be a Day of Vengeance in the Heart of God: And the Day of the Lord's Vengeance is the Year of Recompences for the Controversie of Zion, *Isai.* 34: 8. The Day is coming when they shall "give thanks unto the Lord for he is good." For his Mercy is for ever, when he hath redeemed them from the Hand of the Enemies, and gathered them out of the Lands, from the East, and from the West, from the North, and from the South, *Psal.* 107. 1: 2, 3: See what is said, *Revel.* 14: 3, 4. And they sung, as it were a new Song, before the Throne, and before the four Beasts, and the Elders, and no Man could learn that Sung, but the hundred and forty and four Thousand, which were redeemed from the Earth. — These are they which follow the Lamb, whithersoever he goeth: These were redeemed from among Men, being the First-fruits unto God, and to the Lamb.

With what Confidence may they go unto God, and pray, that he would bring them out of the Net, that the wicked have laid privily for them; and commit their Soul and Spirit into the Hand of God, even upon this Ground, that the Lord God of Truth hath redeemed them, as *David* did, *Psal.* 31: 4, 5. His poor redeemed Ones have many Temptations to meet with here, and their Enemies are vigilant, and active, malicious and desperate; and so are seeking by all Means to reproach, slander and backbite them that they may put them to Shame; and do speak Lies and grievous Things proudly and contemptuously against them, that they might get them put to Death as *David* found in his own Experience, in that same *Psalm*, *Perse.* 11, 13, 18. But this is a Cordial

gainst all, they are redeemed, and their Redeemer liveth, and is the holy One of Israel, and the Lord of Hosts, and therefore will take Course with these wicked Enemies, in due Time ; and is able to crush them and all their wicked Devices, and defeat all their Counsels and Machinations against his ransom-ed Ones. He redeemeth from Deceit, *Psal: 72: 14.* *He shall redeem their Soul from Deceit and Violence ; and precious shall their Blood be in his Sight.*

If his redeemed Ones have to do with Men of Power, and Cruelty, who will hearken to no right or Reason ; but oppress, plunder, spoil, enjure, wound and kill ; their Redeemer is one who rede-meth from Violence, as the forecited Passage, *Pf. 72: Verse 14.* sheweth, and *2 Sam: 22. Verse 3.* —

*Thou savest me from Violence : He will, when he seeth that is it for his Glory, and for their real Good, break the Yoke of the Oppressour, and set them at Liberty ; and if not, he can and will redeem from the Evil of that Violence and Wrong, that it shall not harm them, as to their main Interest. And at length the redeemed of the Lord must be and shall be delivered out of the Hands of all their Enemies. I will ransom them (saith the Lord, *Hos: 13: 14:*) from the Power of the Grave, I will redeem them from Death : O Death, I will be thy Plagues : O Grave, I will be thy Destruction, Repentance shall be bid from mine Eyes: See also *1 Cor. 15. 55.**

If they have to do with inward Corruptions, Temptations, out-breaking Sins, and the like, that prove vexing & troublesome unto them, especially in a Day of outward Trouble & Temptation: They may know, for their Comfort that he is a Redeemer here also ; "For he shall redeem *Israel* from all his Iniquities, *Pf. 130: 8.* He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purifie unto himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works, *Tit: 2: 14.* He gave himself for his redeemed Church, that he might sanctifie and cleanse it, with the washing

washing of Water, by the Word ; that he might present to himself, a glorious Church, not having Spot or Wrinkle, or any such Thing ; but that it should be holy and without Blemish, *Ephes. 5. 26, 27.*

If they have Fears of their Miscarriages that trouble them ; the Times being Evil, and the Way full of Snares, and they conscious to themselves of their Blindness, and Weakness, they fear they shall not go off the Stage without a Blot, but shall in one Particular or other give the Enemy Ground of rejoicing and insulting, and grieve the Hearts of the Godly ; they would know, that he, who hath redeemed them, will teach them, and lead them, *Isai: 48: 17.* " Thus saith the Lord thy Redeemer, the holy One of *Israel*, " I am the Lord thy God, which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the Way, which thou shouldest go. The Redeemer is careful & tender of the redeemed Ones, he will not lose them by the Way, after he hath redeemed them at such a Rate, as is his own Blood, and bought them out of the Hand of Justice, of Law, of Satan the Jailor, and of Sin the Fetters : He will compleat his Redemption.

If they should fear, that because of their Folly and Sin, in wilful departing from him, and running out of his Hand, when he was leading them by the Way, he should not look upon them again, but suffer them to their own Wills, and to wander until they perish ; they would know, that he is a merciful Redeemer, and will receive them, whensoever they return, and pardon all their Iniquities, *Isai: 44: 21, 22:* " Remember these, O Jacob and *Israel* : For thou art my Servant : I have formed thee ; thou art my Servant, O *Israel*, thou shalt not be forgotten of me, I have blotted out, as a thick Cloud, thy Transgressions, and as a Cloud thy Sins ; return unto me, for I have redeemed thee.

In a Word, if the great Redemption ; through the Blood of the Lamb, that is, from the Wrath and Curse of God, from Hell, from the Power of the

Law, from the Dominion of Satan, from the Slavery of Sin, from a present evil World, &c. be fixed and sure, through Faith in the Redeemer, all the petty Evils, that they foresee, or apprehend in their Way, need not trouble them. If the great Redemption stand, (and stand it must, for the Foundation of the Lord standeth sure, having this Seal, the Lord knoweth who are his, 2 Tim. 2: 19.) all is sure, for the Redemption from all these under and petty Evils must necessarily follow, so as may best contribute to the carrying on and perfecting of the great and everlasting Redemption. He, who hath bought them out of the Hand of Justice, hath bought them out of the Hand of the Devil, and out of the Hand of all the Devils Instruments, and from all that they can do, or imagine against them.

May not Faith then feed upon this Feast and live, let the World rage as it will? May not Believers from this Consideration draw Inferences of Comfort, Joy in the holy Ghost, Peace that passeth Knowledge, Hope that shall never make them ashamed; Strength and Support, that shall carry them hollow, and of Stedfastness in a Day of Trial? Here the Just may live by Faith.

C. H A P. IX. CONSIDERATION IV.

*Taken from the many Faithful Promises,
made of Delivery out of Trouble.*

There are, as is manifest, many great and precious Promises set down in the Scriptures of God; and Promises both plain and particular, concerning Deliveries from outward Trouble, Bondage, Oppression,

on, Distress, and Persecution; and they are set down for the Comfort and Establishment of the People of God: And here is a richly covered Table with all Varieties, for Faith to feed upon. The Promises are the kindly Food of Faith; by them and through them it sucketh in from the Fountain of all Fulness, God in Christ, all that the poor Soul standeth in need of, in every Exigent and Strait; hence there are Promises suited to every Case, that the Believer can be into: Which is a clear Demonstration of the Riches of the Love and Tenderness of God toward his Children.

We are only here to speak of such Promises, as concern the outward Trouble, that his People meet with, at the Hands of Men, given to persecute and afflict the People of God, in a World; which, as the Case is ordinary, so are they many and ample; and sure they have a Voice with them, and carry Comfort and Life in them to the believing Soul, while under Affliction and Oppression. And in speaking a little concerning these, in Prosecution of our Scope, we would,

First, Take notice of some (and but of some) of these many Promises, that are scattered up and down the Scriptures, in great Multitudes, answerable to the Case mentioned; some whereof we find annexed unto Duties called for, especially at such a Time, and so proposed as it were conditionally; such as these, *Psal. 50. Verse 15.* "Call upon me, in the Day of Trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorifie me, *Psal. 91: Verse 15.* He shall call upon me in Trouble, I will deliver him, and honour him, *Verse 16.* With long Life will I satisfy him, and shew him my Salvation: So *Psal. 33: 18, 19.* Behold the Eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his Mercy. To deliver their Soul from Death, and to keep them alive in Famine. And *37. 40.* And the Lord shall help them and deliver them; he shall deliver them

them from the wicked, and save them; because they trust in him. And 145. Verses 18, 19. The Lord is nigh unto all them, that call upon him, to all that call upon him in Truth. He will fulfil the Desires of them that fear him; he also will hear their Cry and save them, *Prov. 20. 22.* — Wait on the Lord and he shall save thee. And many more such there are. Again, some we find set down, in a more absolute Manner, without any such previous Condition annexed, as (to mention only a few) *Psal. 9. 18.* "For the needy shall not always be forgotten: The Expectation of the Poor shall not perish for ever, *Psal. 12. Verse 5.* For the Oppression of the poor, and for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord, I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him. And 34: 19, 20. Many are the Afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. He keepeth all his Bones, not one of them are broken. And 94. 14, 15. For the Lord will not cast off his People, neither will he forsake his Inheritance. But Judgment shall return unto Righteousness, and all the upright in Heart shall follow it. And 97. 10, 11.

He preserveth the Souls of his Saints: He delivereth them out of the Hand of the wicked, Light is sown for the righteous, and Gladness for the upright in Heart. And 103. 6. The Lord executeth Righteousness and Judgment for all that are oppressed. *Jer. 51: 36.* Therefore thus saith the Lord, behold I will plead thy Cause, and take Vengeance for thee, &c. *Zeph. 3. Verse 14, 15. &c.* Sing O Daughter of Zion, be glad and rejoice with all the Heart, O Daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away thy Judgments, he hath cast out thine Enemy, — thou shalt not see evil any more — the Lord thy God, in the midst of thee is mighty, he will save; he will rejoice over thee with Joy — I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn Assembly: — Behold, at that Time,

* Time, will undo all that afflict thee, and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out, &c.

But Secondly, In Order to our right Improvement of these and the like Promises, we would know,

1. That God is Faithful in all his Promises; for he is Faithful that promised, *Heb. 10:23*. He remembered his holy Promise, — and brought forth his People, *Psal: 105: 42, 43*. He is God the Faithful God, which keepeth Covenant and Mercy with them that love him, *Deut: 7: Ver. 9*. He is Faithful. *1 Cor. 1: 9*; and *10. Ver: 13: 1 Thes: 5: 24*: Nay his Faithfulness is great, and reacheth to the Clouds, *Pf: 36:5*. He will not suffer his Faithfulness to fail, his Covenant will he not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his Lips, *Psal: 89: 33, 34*. His Faithfulness doth not alter; for it is unto all Generations, *Psal. 119: 90*. He is a God, that cannot lie, *Tit. 1: Ver: 2: Yea* it is impossible for him to lie, *Heb: 6: 18*. He is not a Man, that he should lie, *Num: 23: Verse 19* A God of Truth, without Iniquity, just and right is he, *Deut: 32. Verse 4*. Therefore the Words of his Mouth are tried Words, and all his Promises must have a sure Accomplishment.

2. That the Promises are now secured, and ensured unto Believers upon another Ground, beside this; even upon the Mediation of Christ, who hath purchased all the good Things promised, and hath by the Blood of the Covenant confirmed the same, and all the Promises thereof; and by his Death, he hath given Force unto his Testament, wherein all the Legacies are conveyed by Promises. So that all the Promises are in him, Yea, and in him, Amen, *2 Cor. 1: Verse 20*.

3. Whatever Accomplishment these Promises and the like have had, in former Times, they are not yet out of Date; the good, wrapped up in them, is not exhausted; though the Church of old found them all made good, and received the good Thing held forth therein.

therein; yet they stand as full of Sap as ever " For whatsoever Things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through Patience and Comfort of the Scripture might have Hope, Rom: 15: 4: These Promises are not recorded in Scripture as mere Matters of History; but are as a River, the Streams whereof must make glad the whole City of God; and as a Table always standing covered with Variety of Dishes, for the Supply and Comfort of all the Children of the House; the Church, now and of Old is but one Church; all make up one Company of the redeemed, and are under one Head and Husband, having the same Heirship: They grow all upon the same Root and Stock, and so partake of the Fatness of the Root.

4 Hence Believers in all Ages, have a right to the same Promises, wherefore they are said to be heirs of the Promises, Heb. 6: 17. The Promises belonging to the Covenant, all the Children of the Covenant have a right unto them, and every Believer, being within the Covenant, may challenge them, as belonging to him; because he hath a Right unto the Mother promise; *I will be thy God.* This is the Fountain, out of which all the rest run as Streams. Yea Promises that in the Letter would seem to have been made peculiarly to one particular Believer, may by others be applied by Faith, if the Promise be of such Things as are of common Advantage and Necessity: As the Promise made unto Joshua, Chap. 1: 5: — ‘ I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee, may be applied by other particular Persons, even in the Days of the Gospel, as the Apostle teacheth, Heb: 13: 5. and that unto other Uses, as Occasion offereth. Whence, 5: We see, that the Promises admit of large Ampliations, being very comprehensive, and therefore applicable to many and various Cases, beside what might have been especially designed or intended, when the Promise was first uttered, as to the Persons, for the Comfort of whom they were first given out: As we see in that last cited Passage, Heb:

Heb: 13: 5: That Promise, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee, spoken to Joshua, Chap. I: 5. to encourage him in his Wars and Fightings against the Canaanites, of whose Land he was going to take Possession; and so gave him Ground of Assurance of the Lord's Presence, guiding, supporting and strengthening him, against all Difficulties, is applied by the Apostle, as implying the Lord's making up all their particular Wants, and supplying all their Necessities; for he bringeth it in, as an Argument to move them to be content with their present State, and to walk without Covetousness: Or if we should take this Promise, as meaneed of what was said to Jacob, Gen:28: 15. the Matter will be the same Way evident. Beside that there are many Promises conceived in general comprehensive Terms, so framed, as it were, of Purpose, that Believers, in their several particular Exigences might safely and warrantably betake themselves thereto, and make a comfortable Application thereof.

6. We would distinguish betwixt Promises of Spiritual Mercies and Favours, and Promises of temporal good Things: As these are less necessary than those so they should be less in our Account: And though the Lord be true and faithful in all his Promises yet he hath reserved a greater Latitude to himself, in the bestowing of them, and is free to bestow them, in the Letter, or in the Equivalent, or rather, in what is better: so in our applying of them, and in preyin thereupon, we ought to use much humble Submission, leaving it to the wise Will of the Lord, to grant it, in what Manner he thinketh good: Although is true, when the Lord hath a Mind to bestow particular temporal Favour, he may secretly promise the Soul to any holy Importunity; which yet neither should be drawn into Example by others, in suiting for temporal Things; nor should be a Preparation to themselves in After-times, without the like secret Impulse, wherein withall much spiritual Wisdom and Sobriety is necessary; and it is certain, his People

do not fare the worse at his Hands, that with great Submission, they put large Blanks in his Hand.

7. As to Spiritual Promises, we must also distinguish betwixt such as are about such Particulars, as concern the very *Being* of Godliness and Christianity, without which the Man can not subsist as a Christian; and other spiritual Promises, that are of good Things, not so much necessary to the *Being*, as to the *Well-being* of a Christian: Such as are concerning Comforts, and higher Measures of Grace and the like: As in these last, the Lord bath reserved a Latitude himself; so he calleth for a greater Submission at our Hands.

8. And for this Cause, we would remember, that the Promises, as they are ensured and made over Christ, the Head of the Church; so they are principally granted to the Church and to every particular Member, as a Member thereof, and according to his interest therein: So that, though every particular Believer receive not every particular Promise accomplished to him, in the Letter; but only such as are necessary for his being a Member, and others, as the several Members seeeth good for his particular Good & Condition; yet all the promises take Effect, in that they are performed to the Church, in some one Member or other, in some Time or other, the great and only wise Dis-
tributor of all, Jesus Christ the Administrator, and Interpreter of his own Testament, seeth fit. As in the several Body, though every Member partake of Life; yet it is not requisite, that the Feet should have all that Head or Heart, or other Parts stand in need of; though the Heart is fainting, it calleth for a Cordial and though the Cordial be not applied to the Hand or Foot, more immediately to the Heart, the whole Body, every Member, as a Member thereof, receiveth advantage thereby. Hence, we being Members one of another, Promises made good to any of the Members entire Body, should be as made Good to our selves; so we should rejoice thereat, and observe the Faithfulness

fulness of God to the Church, in fulfilling particular Promises, to such or such Members, as he seeth, shall contribute most to the good of the Whole. If the Foot be wounded, a Plaister should be applied thereto, and the Hand should not think it is neglected; because a Plaister is not applied to it too.

9. Promises concerning the Growth, Prosperity and Advancement of the Kingdom, and Church of Christ, in General, should be with great Sobriety applied to particular Churches and Places; seeing the Kingdom of Christ may be a coming and growing Kingdom, though his Interest may be manifestly upon the decaying Hand, in this or that particular Place. Yet there may be several Passages in the Providence of God, giving great Ground of Hope, of the Lord's Purpose of Good, towards this or that particular Church; which may and should be zealously improved, in pleading with him: And however Matters go, the Lord will take it well, that People be earnest with him, in the Behalf of this or that particular Church; yet with Submission, as to the Time, Manner and Measure of his appearing for her; seeing he may build up the Walls of Jerusalem in troublous Times, and may advance the spiritual Good of the Church, though outward trouble remain, yea and increase.

10. Hence all our earnest seeking of the Accomplishment of Promises, would be designed unto a spiritual End: As our seeking of our Delivery from outward Trouble & Persecution, for the Truths sake, would not be to the End, we might enjoy Ease, Quietness, and good Accommodation, and have Liberty to live in Peace under our Vine and Fig-tree; but the End, the spiritual Good of the Church and our selves may be advanced; for the Promises must be looked on, as purchased for a spiritual End, as running in a spiritual Channel: And thus, we might find many a Time the Promise of Delivery made good, though the Delivery we looked for, were

not granted, as when the spiritual End, for which these outward Deliveries should have been sought or by us, was attained another Way, even though the outward Trouble remained.

11. Hence we may see, that as to particular Promises of outward good Things, the Lord hath a liberty in his own Hand, to grant them in the Letter and in Specie, or not, as he thinketh Good : So that believers, in their seeking after these promised Things, ought to be very Submissive, not only as to the Time and Manner of his granting of them, but even as to the granting or not granting of the Particular it self unto us: For sometimes he seeth it good, not to grant the particular good Thing, as delivery from an oppressing Enemy; and so useth his absolute Sovereignty, or rather his fatherly Wisdom and Goodness, measuring out these Mercies, pleaseth him best, and as he seeth it will contribute most to his Glory, and to their real Good. Hence notwithstanding of these Promises, many a Time particular Churches have been kept under Affliction and sharp Persecution, many a Year; and particular Persons have been kept under all their Days.

12. Yet for all this, we must not think, that the faithfulness of God doth fail ; nor can he be said to have forgotten his Promises : For his Promises of those Things were not absolute, nor was the Meaning of the Promise, that they should be granted, at all Times, and in the very Letter: They were Sake upon the Matter conditional, to wit, if the Lord saw it would tend to his Glory, to give the very Particular; and if he saw, it would be for their good, but did not for their Hurt. Yea this holdeth true ; that either God giveth the Particular promised, when it must needs, or that which is as good, or better, in its consequence, and thus the Promise is more than made good : wherefore Paul, 2 Cor. 12. the Particular he lived for very earnest for, and begged of the Lord thrice several Times ; yet, when he said to him, *May Grace*

is sufficient for thee, he got as good, and as Matter then stood, that which was much better.

13. Notwithstanding of this, it would be remembered, that oftentimes the Lord is pleased, to grant the very Particular, in Specie and Letter, that was promised, and is sought after, *to wit*, outward Delivery. How often did David find this true in Experience? He cried, and the Lord answered him, and granted to him all his Desire; as the Book of the Psalms doth abundantly witness, and the Experience of many other Christians confirmeth.

But it will be laid, seeing Matters are so, as to external Deliveries, and the like Favours, in the Time of outward Calamities, that the Lord seeth it good sometimes, not to grant the Particular desired; how can Faith feed upon the Promises, and help the Soul of the Believer unto a Life, in a Day of such Afflictions and Tribulations?

In Satisfaction to this, we would, *Thirdly*, Consider what Improvement Faith may make of the Promises, as to these Things, even notwithstanding of what is said: And

1. It cannot but yield Matter of Joy and Comfort unto the Child of God, to know for Truth and to have the undoubted Grounds of Assurance that however it be with him in Particular, it shall be well with the Church; the Promises shall all be made good to her, he is Faithful, who hath said it, and he will also do it. He will make good his Word in all Points to her; not one of them shall fail. Can a Christian Soul know, and hear of this, and not be made to forget his own Sorrow and Suffering? Can a kindly Son of the Family not be refreshed and comforted, in the midst of his personal Sufferings, to know that it is and will be well with his Father and Family? We see David, *Psal. 69.* while he is in sad Exercises, thorow the Psalm, wherein he was Type of Jesus, unto whom many of the Particulars mentioned are in a special Manner applied, comforting himself, under all these Pressures, with this, *Yet*

34, 35, 36. Let the Heavens and Earth praise him, (a remarkable Change from what was to be seen in the preceeding Part of the Psalm) the Seas and every Thing that moveth therein : For God will save Zion, and build the Cities of Judah, that they may dwell there, and have it in Possession. The Seed also of his Servants shall inherit it, and they that love his Name shall dwell therein. So Psal. 102. where the Psalmist is in a very Afflicted Condition, and overwhelmed, and is pouring out his Complaint before the Lord, the Psalm being the Prayer and Expressions of such an One, as the Title sheweth. Now what gave him Comfort in the midst of all this ? See Verses 13, 16. Thou shalt arise and have Mercy upon Zion, — When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his Glory. The Faith of Zions Prosperity, upon the Ground of the Promise, was enough to support and comfort his Soul.

2. Whatever be the Believers present outward Case ; and howbeit he see no Appearance of a Delivery in Haste ; yet he may find Life, Strength and Comfort, in the unchangeable Promises, made concerning his eternal Salvation ; for thence he may infer, and sing upon good Ground, That neither Tribulation, nor Distress, nor Persecution, nor Famine, nor Nakedness, nor Peril, nor Sword shall separate him from the Love of Christ, Rom. 8. 35. The Treasure and the Man's Stock being sure, what can a small considerable Loss do ? May not the Thoughts of the sealed Charters of the everlasting Inheritance comfort a Man, under a Shower of soft Rain ?

3. The Promises are comfortable, as speaking out the wonderful Love & Care of God, towards his weak and faint hearted Followers ; therefore are they shaped and made fit for every Case, a poor Believer can be into ; when the Man thinks of this. That God hath had mind of him, and prepared Cordials for him, what ever Case he can be into ; how must his Heart leap for Joy ? How light and easie will his sickness be when he seeth by Faith the Lord of

Heaven and Earth, coming to his Bed-side, and preparing to him a strengthning Cordial, and holding it to his Mouth? How tolerable will his Pain be when he seeth the Lord preparing a Roller, and Salve to cure him of that Hurt?

4. It is refreshing unto a weary Traveller, to have a suitable Companion with him, that is keeping him up with refreshing Discourses by the Way: The Believer, in the Promises hath the Lord God bearing him Company, and entertaining him with suitable and Heart-strengthning Discourses: The Promises are God's speaking to the weary Traveller and comforting them with good Words: So that the Child of God may listen to the Promises, and there hear what God is saying to his Soul: And all the Promises being good Words, and comfortable Words, they carry nothing but Peace and Comfort in their Bosom; they are nothing but good Tidings. How sweet are thy Words to my Taste? (Said David, Psalm 119. 103) sweeter than Honey to my Mouth; they are God's Word, that he will perform, Jer. 29. 10. 1 Kings 8. 20. 2 Chron. 6. 10. and therefore may the Believer sing with David, Psalm 56. Verse 4 In God will I praise his Word, in God I have put my Trust, I will not fear what Flesh can do unto me. They are the faithful and true Sayings of God, and worthy of all Acceptation, 2 Tim. 4. 8, 9. 2 Tim. 2. 11, 12.

5. A Sight by Faith of the Promises, as it puts the Soul to Prayer; for Hope that is begotten by Faith in the Promise, encourageth to a calling on the Lord over all Difficulties, with Earnestness and Affinity Psalm. 119. 147 I prevented the dawning of the Morning and cried: I hoped in thy Word: So it giveth great Encouragement and Boldness with Confidence in their Prayer; when they know, how they stand upon the Ground of a Promise, and can with humble Boldness press a Performance of what the Lord hath promised. How sweet and comfortable was it David, when he had this to say, Quicken me, and strength-

en me according to thy Word, Psal. 119. Verses 25, 28, 107, 116, 154. How comfortable then are the Promises unto a Believer, upon this Account, that upon the Ground of the Promise he knows, that he is allowed to seek what he wanteth and would have from God, and he knows God will not put him away from his Door with a Refusal, he will get the Promise performed, either in the Particular, or in that which is as good, or better; he knows he may abide at God's Door, and in a Manner refuse to come away, until he get his good Answer, yea, he hath Ground to plead the Promise in the hardest Case he can be into, as Psal. 119. Verse 28 My Soul melteth away for heaviness, strengthen thou me according to thy Word. Verse 25. My Soul cleaveth unto the Dust, quicken thou me, according to thy Word. So Verse 107. I am Afflicted very much, quicken me. O Lord, according to thy Word.

6. A Sight by Faith of the Promises giveth a clear Discovery of good and noble Purposes, that God hath; for they shew, what are the Thoughts of his Heart, what he mindeth to do, what are the Projects he hath in Hand. Let Matters look as they will, in the World, the Promises tell Believers, how Matters shall go: And upon this Account they are upon the Secrets of the Lord, and his Secret is with them that fear him; for when the World and the God of this World is raging against them, and threatening to destroy and ruin the whole Church, and all the Concerns of Christ; the Promises assure the Believer, That God hath a far other Purpose, and that all that Hell can do, shall not get his Interest destroyed; they may well scour and rub the Rust off his People, they shall not be able to destroy. Who feeth not what a Life may hence be fucked.

7. Faith in the Promises will bring in a Life of Hope unto the Soul, under all Discouragements, Improbabilities, yea, and to Sense, Impossibilities; Abraham, having the sure Promise of God, that he

should be a Father of many Nations, believed in Hope against Hope, Rom. 4. 18. for Faith seeth the Faithfulness of God which is great unto the Heavens, engaged ; and that being engaged, Faith seeth all the Power of God, to whom nothing is impossible, engaged also. So that though there were no Appearance of an Accomplishment ; yea though all Things should seem to say, There will be no Accomplishment, Faith will not give it over ; but upon the Promises will conclude, that Miracles shall be wrought, and the Course of Nature overturned, if the Promises of God fail, Abraham would neither season from his own Body now Dead, when he was an hundred Years Old, nor from the Deadness of Sarah's Womb, Rom. 4. Verse 19. Nor would Sarah consider her Age to conceive, now gone, according to the Course of Nature ; but judged him Faithful, who had promised, Heb. 11. Verse 11.

8. Even Faith and Promises, that are not to be accomplished in our Days, will yield a Life : Hence the Promises of the coming of the Messiah, and of the great and glorious Days of the Gospel, did afford a Life of Joy, Comfort, and Hope to the Church of Old. The Believing Fathers died in Faith, not having received the Promises, (that is in their Accomplishment,) but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and imbraced them, Heb. 11. 13, 39. A Man will plant an Orchard, and rejoice in the Hope of the Fruit it shall in due Time yield, though his Posterity, and not himself, shall reap that Fruit. By Faith Abraham sojourned in the Land of Promise as in a strange Country, dwelling in Tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the Heirs with him, in the same Promise, Heb. 11. 9.

• 9. Faith in the Promises can fortifie and strengthen a Man against the lying Suggestions of Satan, and all the discouraging Insinuations of corrupt Nature, and carnal Reason ; for when they would suggest, that the Lord were slack in performing his Promises,

as having forgotten the same ; Faith will say, That the Lord is not slack concerning his Promise, as some Men count slackness, but is long suffering, 2 Pet. 3. 9. When Temptation would say, That the Lord had forgotten, and that now after so long Delay, there were small, or no Hope : Faith will answer, That God cannot forget. He remembred his holy Promise, Abraham his Servant, and he brought forth his People with Joy, and his Chosen with Gladness, Psal. 105. 42, 43. And this came to pass, at the End of the four hundred and thirty Years ; in the self-same Day, it came to pass, that all the Hosts of the Lord went out from the Land of Egypt, Exod. 12. Verse 41. So that the Space of four hundred and thirty Years, made not the Promise to be forgotten one Day. Nay, when Unbelief would say, It is to be feared, that after so long Delay, and after so many Revolutions, Matters shall fall out otherwise, than we expect according to the Promise ; Faith can answer, in the Words of Joshua, Josh. 23. 45. There failed not ought of any good Thing, which the Lord had spoken unto the House of Israel, all came to pass ; and all this notwithstanding of all the Changes, Revolutions, and Alterations in Affairs : So Josh. 23. 14. — *And ye know (these are the Words of Joshua to the People) in all your Hearts, and in all your Souls, that not one Thing hath failed, of all the good Things, which the Lord your God spake concerning you : All are come to pass unto you, and not one Thing hath failed thereof.* Solomon had the same Observation, after all the Revolutions, that interveened betwixt the Death of Joshua, and that very Time, 1 Kings. 8. 56. *Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto his People Israel, according to all that he promised, there hath not failed one Word of all his good Promises, which he promised by the Hand of Moses his Servant.* When Temptation would be ready to discourage the poor Soul, because of Disappointments from Year to Year, and Frustrations of their Hope of the Accomplishment ; Faith in the Promises would put a good Construction upon all

these Delays ; and say, The Lord is awaiting the fit Season, according to that, *Isai. 30. 18.* And therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you ; and therefore will the Lord be exalted that he may have Mercy upon you ; for the Lord is a God of Judgment : Blessed are all they that wait for him. And would call to mind that Word, in the End of *Isai. 60.* — *I the Lord will hasten it in his Time.*

10 Faith in the Promises can afford a Life unto the Believer, in the midst of all outward and manifest Discouragements, taken from their present Case, and the present Dispensation they are under : As for Example, 1. When notwithstanding of the Promises of Outgate and Deliverance, they see themselves put to wrestle with Fire and Water, with violent Overflowings, and fiery Flames ; then Faith can suck Comfort and Support out of that Promise, *Isai. 43.* 2. *When thou passest thorow the Waters, I will be with thee ; and thorow the Rivers, they shall not overflow thee : When thou walkest thorow the Fire thou shall not be burnt, neither shall the Flame kindle upon thee.* 3. When notwithstanding of the Promises of upholding, they find they cannot stand, Temptations sometime prevail and they are overcome, which is indeed a most discouraging Thing ; Faith can suck Life and Comfort out of another Promise, such as that, *Ps. 37. 24.* *Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down ; for the Lord upholdest with his Hand.* 3. When they are scattered and banished from the Land, that they expected to have dwelt constantly in ; Faith can draw Support out of that Promise, *Ezek. 11. 16.* Therefore say Thus saith Lord God, Although I have cast them far off among the Heathen, and although I have scattered them among the Countries ; yet will I be to them, as a little Sanctuary, in the Countries, where they shall come. 4. When instead of the expected Delivery, Affliction and Persecution continueth and increaseth ; Faith can run to that Promise, *Mark 10. 30.* and draw Life from it, *But he shall receive an hundred Fold,* now in this

Time

Time, — with Persecution, 5. When all is destroyed in Appearance, or like to be destroyed, and there is no Outgate, nor escaping, Faith will feed upon a Remnant, and feast upon a Crumb; and suck at these Promises and the like, "Isai. 28: 5. In that Day, shall the Lord of Hosts be for a Crown of Glory, and for a Diadem of Beauty unto the residue of his People, Isai. 11. 11. 12. And it shall come to pass in that Day, that the Lord shall see his Hand again, the second Time, to recover the Remnant of his People, which shall be left, from *Affyria*, and from *Egypt*, and from *Paphros*, and from *Cush*, and from *Elam*, and from *Shinar*, and from *Hamath*, and from the Islands of the Sea. And he shall set up an Ensign for the Nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of *Israel*, and gather together the dispersed of *Judah*, from the four Corners of the Earth, And the like Jerem. 23. Verse 3. and 31. 7. 8. Ezek. 6: 8. and 14. 22. Mica. 2. 12. Zech. 8. 12. (6.) When, even as to the Remnant, there may be but small Hopes; Because of the great Fears, that they shall prove no better than the rest; Faith can look to other comfortable Promises, and feed upon them; such as these, "Isai. 10. 20, 21. And it shall come to pass, in that Day, that the Remnant of *Israel*, and such as are escaped of the House of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them: But shall stay upon the Lord, the holy One of *Israel* in Truth. The Remnant shall return, even the Remnant of *Jacob*, unto the mighty God, Ezek. 7. 16. But they that escape of them shall escape, and shall be on the Mountains like Doves of the Valleys, all of them mourning, every one for his Iniquity, Zeph. 3. 12, 13. I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor People; and they shall trust in the Name of the Lord. The Remnant of *Israel* shall not do Iniquity, nor speak Lies, neither shall a deceitful Tongue be found in their Mouth.

So that we see, the Treasure of the Promises is rich and large ; and Faith hath a fair Field to feed upon ; so that be the Believers Case, or the Case of Church, what it will, Faith can get some Promise or other, to make a Feast of ; and can suck Support, Comfort, Strength, and Ground of Hope, and of Waiting with Patience therefrom.

But here it will be said, There is one Thing, that marreth the Comfort of all these Grounds, and putteth us from sucking Consolation from them, in Behalf of the Church ; and that is, the Conscience of Guilt lying on, and unrepented of; which saith, There is no Hope : If we were a penitent People, turning to the Lord with all our Heart, and repenting of the Evil of our Ways, then there were some Hope, that his Wrath should be turned from us, and his afflicting Hand taken off us, and that he would visit us with Salvation, and command Deliverance for us : But when it is not thus with us, what can we make of the Promises ? In answer to this, I shall grant,

1. That it is true, the Lord doth not afflict the Children of Men willingly, but his Rods and Scourges on a Land are for their Iniquities ; " For our Iniquities he hath sold; and for our Transgressions is our Mother put away, *Ias: 50: 1.* And it is Iniquity, that separateth betwixt us and our God, and our Sins have hid his Face from us, *Isi. 59. 2.* Upon this Account therefore, we must justify the Lord in all that he doth, and blame our selves for all, seeing the procuring Cause is found with us.

2. It is also true, That God useth sometimes to double and redouble, yea and multiply his Strokes upon an impenitent people, who do not repent, and will not change their Ways ; he will punish seven Times more, and again seven times more, yea and a third Time, and a fourth Time, *Levit: 26: 18, 21, 24, 28.* He will send sore Rods, and yet his Angels

will not be turned away, but his Hand be stretched out still, *Isai: 5: Verse 25: and 9: 11, 17, 21: and 10: 4.*

3. It is likewise undeniable, that the Prophets of old did, in the Name of the Lord, call upon the People to repent of the Wickedness of their Hearts and Ways, and to turn from their Abominations, that God's Anger might be removed, and his Rod taken off them; as is clear out of their Prophecies.

4. It is likewise a Truth, that People under the Rod are called to search out their Iniquities with Seriousness, and in all Haste to run to the Blood of Christ, that they may be washen away; and should look upon this Course, as the shortest Cut unto a Delivery. They shold hear the Voice of the Rod, and who it is that hath appointed the same, that their Delivery, when it cometh, may prove a sanctified Delivery indeed, according to the Grounds of the Word.

Yet though we should not see such a Frame following the Rod, it will not be safe peremptorily to conclude, That there will be no Outgate or Delivery from the Calamity; because God, the great and absolute Sovereign, bath his own special Acts of Sovereignty, whereby he sheweth himself Gracious; because he will be Gracious: And therefore, though upon the one Hand we should not abuse the Sovereign Grace of God, and continue in our Sin; because the Lord can act thus in a sovereign Manner; so upon the other Hand, (which is the end for which I mention this) his People, though not satisfied with themselves, or with the Universality of the Church, wherein they live, as to Godly Sorrow, Repentance and Amendment, but would fain see more and more of that, yet should not despont, and say, There is no Hope, and absolutely and peremptorily conclude there will be no Outgate; for this were to limit the holy One of Israel. Therefore that we may speak something to the Objection, and shew, how notwithstanding

standing of the Want of that measure of Sorrow for Sin and Amendment of Ways, which is called and wished for, at their Hands, who are under the Rod of God; yet the Matter is not desperate; we shall propose these few Particulars to Consideration.

1. We find several Times, that God hath delivered out of Trouble and Distress an unhumbled and impenitent People; and that for his own Names Sake, and for his Truth and Covenants Sake; though nothing in the Persons delivered could have promised such a Thing; yea, when their Carriage and Disposition might have provoked God, to have smitten yet Seventimes more; yet the Lord hath been pleased to declare, and give a manifest Proof of his Sovereignty. Not to instance the People of Israel, when the Lord sent Moses to deliver them out of Egypt, amongst whom little of this Frame is very manifest; we have several clear Instances hereof in the Word, See Psal. 78. The Frame of that People was not good, when it is said of them, Verse 36 They flattered him with their Mouth, and lied unto him with their Tongues, Verse 37. For their Heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his Covenant: And yet in the following Verse 38. it is said, But he being full of Compassion, forgave their Iniquity, and destroyed them not; yea, many a Time turned he his Anger away, and did not stir up all his Wrath. Verse 39. For he remembred they were but Flesh, & Wind that passeth away, and cometh not again. Here is one Instance, that hath severals in its Besom. So Psal. 106. 7. 8. It is said, Our Fathers understood not thy Wonders in Egypt; they remembred not the Multitude of thy Mercies, but provoked him at the Sea, at the Red Sea. And what came of this? It is added, Nevertheless he saved them for his Names Sake, that he might make his mighty Power to be known. So Verses 43. 44. 45. Many Times did he deliver them, but they provoked him with their Counsels, and were brought low for their Iniquity. Nevertheless he regarded their Afflictions, when he heard their cry. And he remembred for them his Covenant, and repented

repented according to the Multitude of his Mercies. The like we find, *Isai.* 48. where the House of Jacob are described to be such, as made mention of the God of Israel, but not in Truth, not in Righteousness, *Verse 1.* They were obstinate, and their Neck as an Iron Sinew, and their Brow Brass, *Verse 4.* the Lord knew, that they would deal very treacherously, and were called a Transgressor from the Womb, *Verse 8.* And yet with Amazement we may see what followeth, *Veres 9, 10, 11.* For my Names Sake will I defer mine Anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off : Behold, I have refined thee but not with Silver, I have chosen thee in the Furnace of Affliction : For mine own Sake, even for mine own Sake, will I do it, for how should my Name be polluted, and I will not give my Glory to another. Moreover, *Ezek.* 20. there is a large Process drawn up against that People, and the Lord there sheweth, how their Carriage was such as did provoke him many a Time, to threaten their Destruction ; and when nothing appeared in them, but what in Justice might have brought on the threatned Destruction ; yet he saith, He wrought for his Names Sake, *Verse 9.* And this was not once, nor twice, but three several Times, as *Veres 9, 14, 22.* Whence we see, that the Lord oftentimes followed this Way of Sovereignty, and did not wait upon their Repentance, and sincere Amendment ; but instead of pleading with them, according to Justice, he wrought Deliverance for his own Names Sake : In like Manner we see, *Isai.* 59. a large Catalogue of Sins reckoned up from the Beginning, to *Verse 16.* and it might have been thought, that at the End of such a Sum, there should have been a black Roll of Judgments set down : And yet we see some far other Thing expressed. And he saw : that there was no Man, and wondered that there was no Intercessor ; therefore his own Arm brought Salvation, and his Righteousness sustained him. Is not this wonderful, that when there was not so much as a Man almost

to count upon, to intercede for Delivery, yet he should bring about their Salvation ?

2. Yea, we find the Lord not only taking such a Course as this, to wit, of delivering an unhumbled and unprepared People ; but also we find him giving the Reason of his so dealing ; and that such a Reason too, as may be a Ground of Hope for Time coming, so far at least, as not to conclude the Case desperate. See for this, *Isai. 57. Verses 16, 17, 18, 19.* *For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth : For the Spirit should fail before me, and the Souls I have made, For the Iniquity of his Covetousness was I wroth, and I mole him I hid me and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the Way of his Heart. I have seen his Ways, and will heal him. I will lead him also and restore Comforts unto him, and to his Mourners. I create the Fruit of the Lips, Peace, Peace, to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord , and I will heal him.* Here is a special Act of Sovereign Grace ; when he seeth his People brought so low, that unless he take such a sovereign Way of Mercy, they are ruined ; he saw here that notwithstanding of his Wrath and Indignation kindled against them, they were not the better, but went on frowardly in the Way of their own Heart, so that if he had dealt with them according to their Ways, he should have contended for ever, and have been always wroth, and thereby at length have brought them to nothing. Wherefore, seeing the same God liveth, and is as transcendent in his Mercy and Goodness, as ever, we may not peremptorily conclude, that he will never any more act after such a royal Prerogative. We saw, *Isai. 59. Verse 16.* from what an antecedent he drew a very comfortable consequent. The Antecedent, *he saw that there was no Man, &c.* will oft occur : And dare we say that the Sovereignty of Grace cannot make the like consequent, as there followeth, *Therefore his own Arm brought Salvation ?* See also *Psalm. 103. Verses 13, 14.* *2 Kings 14. Verses 26, 27.*

3. We find moreover, the People of God, notwithstanding of Guilt standing in the Way, comforting themselves in the Hope of an Outgate, upon the Account of God's being Merciful and Gracious, Psal. 103. Verses 8, 9. *The Lord is Merciful and Gracious, slow to Anger, and plenteous in Mercy, and will not always chide, neither will he keep his Anger for ever: And this was notwithstanding that Sin and Guilt appeared: For it is added, He dealeth not with us (as the Words may be read in the present Time) after our Sins, nor rewardeth us after our Iniquities.* So Lam. 3. Jeremiah will have the People, in the midst of their bitter Lamentations, conceiving some Hope, saying, Verse 26. *It is good that a Man should both hope, and quietly wait for the Salvation of the Lord.* And why so? Among other Grounds he giveth this, Verses 31, 32: *For the Lord will not cast off for ever; but though he cause Grief, yet will he have Compassion, according to the Multitude of his tender Mercies.* Now Compassion and tender Mercies in God, respect Sin in his People, and presuppose it. So that we see, how, notwithstanding of Sin standing in the Way, there is Hope, that God will not cast off for ever, but will have Compassion, according to the Multitude of his tender Mercies.

4. We find the People of God praying for a Delivery, notwithstanding that Guilt stood in their View, Jer. 14. When there was an heavy Stroke of Famine upon the Land, Jeremiah with the Church prayed, that God would take away that Stroke: And though Guilt appeared, and, as it were, stared them in the Face, yet they gave not over the Matter, but went on notwithstanding, saying, O Lord, though our Iniquities testify against us, do thou it for thy Name's Sake, Verse 7. They take with Sin, and notwithstanding thereof press their Desire, upon the Account of God's Name. So Daniel Chap. 9. when he is praying for Deliverance out of the Captivity, Sin and Guilt appeareth; yet it doth not stop his Mouth, but he acknowledgeth the same, at great length, Verses 5, 6, 7,

10. 11. and yet for all that presseth for Delivery, Verses 16, 17, 18, 19. Yea we find (and that is very remarkable) Ezra, in his Prayer Chap. 9. hath nothing but Acknowledgment of Sin, and of the Aggravations of Sin, the Consideration of which so filleth him with Shame and Confusion of Face, that he cannot present one express and explicit Petition; and yet the very Drift of his Address, and the Scope he levelled at, in his Confession, was that the People might find Grace in the Eyes of the Lord, and that he would not destroy them, notwithstanding of their many and new Provocations.

5. God can, and sometime doth prevent the Repentance of his People with temporal Deliverances. Though ordinarily, when the Lord cometh in Love, he useth to bless his People with a new Frame of Spirit, and then commandeth Deliverance for them: Yet sometimes he will take another Course, and cause temporal Deliverance usher in Repentance. There are some remarkable Passages, which clear this; such as Ezek. 16, 60, 61, 62, 63. The Lord had been, from the beginning of the Chapter, aggreging many several Ways, the grievous Sins and Provocations of that People, and yet here bespeaketh them thus, though nothing of their Amendment appeared. *Nevertheless, I will remember my Covenant with thee, — then thou shalt remember thy Ways, and be ashamed, and again, Verses 62, 63, and I will establish my Covenant with thee, — that thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy Mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee, for all that thou hast done.* Intimating that he would first be pacified toward them, and turn away his Wrath, and lay by the Rod, (the Effect thereof) and then they would remember and be confounded, and never open their Mouth any more, because of their Frame. So Ezek. 20, 41, 42, 43. He tells them, That he would bring them Home to the Land of Israel, and gather them out of the Countries, where they

hey had been scattered : And then addeth, And here shall ye remember your Ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled, and ye shall lothe your selves in your own Sight ; for all your Evils, that you have committed. And further, Verse 44. And ye shall know, that am the Lord when I have wrought with you for my Names sake, not according to your wicked Ways, nor according to our corrupte Doings. And thus he promiseth to other in godly Sorrow, Shame and Repentance, with their outward Delivery from their exile. A third place we have, Ezek. 36. 24, 25, 26. For I will take you from among the Heathen, and gather you out of all Countries, and will bring you into your own Land. And what followeth thereupon ? Then will I sprinkle clean Water upon you, and ye shall be clean, — a new Heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you, &c.

6. It is also considerable, that when the Lord promiseth Deliverance to his People, and since standeth p, as it were, to darken the Accomplishment of the promise, or to weaken the Hope and Expectation of his People, the Lord also addeth and annexeth another promise, for removing of this Ground of Scruple out of the Minds of his People : A pregnant Passage to this Purpose we have, *Isai. 43.* In that and in the preceding Chapter, the Lord is holding forth many gracious Promises unto his People, and among the rest, Verse 5. he saith, I will bring thy Seed from the East, and gather thee from the West. And Verse 6. I will say to the North, Give up, and to the South, Keep not back; bring my Sons from far, and my Daughters from the Ends of the earth. And again, Verse 14. Thus saith the Lord our Redemer, the Holy One of Israel, for your Sakes, have I sent Babylon, and have brought down all their Nobles, &c. But now how shall Israel get this believed, (for it is yet to be, howbeit in Part expressed as past to hold forth its Certainty) seeing there is so much Guilt in the Way, especially when the Lord is taking notice of the same, and is laying it out before them, we see he doth. Verses 22, 23, 24. Well the Lord addeth a Word, Verse 25, to roll that out of the Way, saying,

saying, I, even I, am he, that blotteth out thy Transgressions for mine own Sake, and will not remember thy Sins.

Whence we see, that even in this bare Moor, when Matters look so hopeless, Faith can hold a Feast, and sing, and believe in Hope against Hope, and thereby keep up the Head and Heart of a poor Soul, when it is like to sink.

CHAP. X.

CONSIDERATION V.

Taken from former Experiences.

Here is another Particular, that Faith can draw much Life from, in an evil Day, whether in Reference to Believers themselves in Particular, or in Reference to the oppressed Church of Christ; and that is the former Experiences, they or the Church have meet with, of the Lord's gracious appearing for them: Yes, the Experiences of the Church, or of particular Believers in former Times, can be Matter for Faith to feed upon, and can afford Matter of Hope; seeing God, who is Unchangeable, the same in all Generations, is as mighty and able now to deliver, as ever he was in former Ages; and as powerful to deliver out of the severest Troubles, as he was to deliver out of the six preceeding, Job 5. 19. So long then as the Lord's Hand is not shortened that he cannot save, his People need not be altogether out of Hope of a Delivery. It is certain that there is no Want of the Experiences of the Lord delivering of his People; so that if particular Believers want Experiences of their own, they have those Experiences of other Saints, and of the Church of God in former Ages; and these may be improved,

or the strengthening of their Hope, and for encouraging of them, under Affliction.

That it may appear, that former Experiences, whether of others, or our own, may and ought to be improven by Believers, whether in Behalf of themselves, or of the Church, for keeping their hearts from sinking under Discouragement, and for preserving them from fainting and hopeless Despondency ; we shall, *First*, Propose some Particulars to clear the same : And *next*, more particularly shew, how Faith may improve this Ground, for the Ends mentioned.

As to the *First*, Let these Things be considered.

1. Christ as typified by *David*, *Psal. 22.* we find his improving the Experiences of others, for the strengthening of his Faith and Hope ; and therefore, Verses 4, 5. he saith, *Our Fathers trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered;* &c. He is addressing himself unto the Father in the Type, and supplicating for Delivery ; and hath the Hope and Expectation to be heard, upon this among other Grounds ; thou diddest deliver our Fathers, and why not me also ? Shall I then account my Case and Condition desperate, seeing thou livest, who didst deliver our Fathers, when they were in Trouble ? From which Instance we see a clear Warrant, for improving the Experiences of others, for the strengthening of our Faith and Hope, in an evil Day : At least, so long, as we have these to look to, we have no Cause to account our Case desperate, and remediable.

2. We have the Practice of the Saints going before us in this, and casting us a Copy : When they were in Trouble, they called to Mind the former proofs they had of God's Power and good Will, in delivering themselves out of former Troubles ; and the Experiences of other Saints before them. So said, *1 Sam. 17. 37.* " The Lord, that delivered me out of the Paw of the Lion, and out of the Paw of

of the Bear : He will deliver me out of the Hand of this Philistine. So the Church, while in a sad Condition, *Psal. 74. 12, 13, 14, 15.* looketh back to the Days of old, wherein God was her King working Salvation in the midst of the Earth : And particularly they call to Mind his wonderful Works in delivering of them from the Egyptians, and how he did divide the Sea by his Strength, and broke the Head of the Dragons, &c. meaning Pharaoh the King of Egypt, who is called a Dragon, *Ezek. 29. 4.* So *Isa. 25.* there is a comfortable Conclusion, Verse 5. That God would bring down the Noise of Strangers, the heat in a dry Place, even the heat, with the Shadow of a Cloud : The Branch of the terrible Ones shall be brought low. But upon what Promises is this built ? See Verse 4. " For thou hast been a Strength to the Poor, a Strength to the Needy in his Distress, a Refuge from the Storm, and a Shadow from the heat, &c. That which God had proved himself to be, in former Times, gave Ground to conclude, he would prove the same again. Be therefore our Condition what it will, we may do, as David did, *Psal. 119. 52.* I remembered thy Judgments old, O Lord, and have comforted my self. We may call to Mind the Lord's Judgments, executed upon Enemies, and thereupon comfort our selves in Hope. See *Psal. 31. 7, 8, 9,* and many other Passages, which might be adduced to this End.

3 We find David exhorting other Saints to rejoice in the Lord upon Deliveries received by himself, intimating thereby, that these Deliveries were of common Concernment to all ; and so in some respect, Mercies and Deliveries to all, all Believers having one main Interest, and so might be improved for the Support, Comfort and Joy of their Souls and the like Case. So *Psal. 34. 3.* " O magnifie the Lord, and let us exalt his Name together. And why ? Verse 4. I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my Fears, &c.

6. This poor Man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his Troubles: So that David's Delivery was of Concernment to all; and such as might encourage them to call upon the same God, in Hope and Confidence to be heard, as David was: And therefore, *Psal. 31.* when he had told, how God had shewed him his marvellous kindness in a Ring City, he exhorteth all Saints, Ver. last, to be of good Courage, intimating, That the Favour and Kindness he had met with, might be Ground of Hope for them in the like Case, and as it were a Pledge that God will strengthen their Hearts.

4. We find the great Sin, that was charged upon the People of *Israel* in the Wilderness, was their forgetting the Works of the Lord, and the Operation of his Hands; and that after he had wonderfully delivered them out of one Strait, and by that wonderful Deliverance had called them to trust in him, in all Time coming, and not to faint, through Misbelief, when new Difficulties appeared: Yet for all that, when a new Trial came, they had as much forgotten, or knew as little by Faith, to draw Strength, comfort and Hope therefrom, as if they had never seen any such Thing all their Days. Hence it is charged upon them, *Psal. 78. 11.* *They forgot his Works, and his Wonders, that he had shewed them.* And again Verse 17. notwithstanding of all he did for them, they "sinned yet more against him. And Verses 18, 19. They tempted God in their Hearts, by asking Meat for their Lust. And they spake against God, and said, Can God furnish a Table in the Wilderness? So also it is again laid to their charge, Verse 32. and 41. Seing then this was their great Sin, which provoked the Lord highly against them, it is past all doubt that the Lord alloweth, yea commandeth his People, to reflect upon bygone Passages of the Lord's Providence about them, or upon others of the Lord's People, and thereupon build their Faith and Hope in their particular Strait

Strait and Difficulty, or in the Difficulty the Church is meeting with.

5. We find the Lord commanding his People the Use of such Means, as might keep the Posterity in Mind of his memorable and wonderful Acts: And to what End, but that the Posterity might have Hope, when they did meet with the like Trials, and in Hope might betake themselves to the same God, who had wrought so wonderfully before. This we have clearly seen down, *Psal. 78. 4, 5, 6, 7.* And the End is also declared, Verse 7. "That they might set their Hope in God, and not forget the Works of God; but keep his Commandments. Verse 8. And might not be as their Fathers, a stubborn and a rebellious Generation, &c. Parents are obliged to acquaint their Children with the Works of the Lord, in delivering of them; that so his great Works of Mercy may be kepted in Memory from Generation to Generation, to the End, that all might hope in God, when new Straits came. For this subordinate End, did the Lord institute the Ordinance of the Passover, as we see, *Exod. 12. 26, 27.* So was the Heap of Stones erected by Joshua, when the People came thorow Jordan, *Josb. 4. 6, 7.* And this was not barely to keep these Passages in Mind, but rather that they might be so remembred, as to be improven and that God's Power might not be again questioned but confid in, when any new Difficulty occurred.

6. We find David appointing several of those Psalms in which he mentioneth the Lord's Goodness, in delivering him out of his Troubles, unto the chief Singer, that is to be made Use of by the Church for her Edification, that when she or any of her Members were in Trouble, they might call to Mind, and make Use of David's Experiences, for their Comfort and Support. Thus we see, he directed the 18. Psalm, in which there is a Sum of God's special Mercy to him recorded: So the 31. 40. and 46. and several other Psalms, wherein his Experiences are recorded, Chap.

7. It is not for nought, that we have so many Experiences of the Saints and Church of God of old, recorded in Scripture, and laid before us. This must be, that we may take notice of these several Passages, and make a good Use of them, even draw strength to our Faith, and Hope therefrom, when we or the Church are in the like Difficulties. *Paul* tells us, *Rom. 15. Ver. 4.* That "whatsoever Things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures might have Hope: And this will hold particularly true of the Passages of God's Deliverances, wrought in and for his Church, which are recorded, that we through Patience and Comfort of these, might have Hope."

Thus have we cleared, how former Experiences whether our own, or of others, and particularly those that are recorded in Scripture, are of Use to bear up the Hearts of, and to yield Ground of Hope and Comfort unto the Children of God, in their particular Distresses, and Hazards: Let us now see, in the next place, what Grounds of Hope, and Confidence ly in these Experiences, to the End, we may see more particularly, how they ought to be improven, that Faith may suck Life and Strength therefrom, in an evil Time.

We find the Church and People of God in their new Straits and Difficulties, strengthning their Faith, hope and Confidence, in their Addresses to God, by calling to Mind the notable Passages of God's Providence, about them or their Fore-fathers, in former Times. So doth *Nehemiah*, Chap. 1. when he is wrestling with God, in Behalf of *Jerusalem*, that was waste, and desolate: Among other Arguments he maketh Use of this, Verse 10. Now these are thy servants, and thy People, whom thou hast redeemed by great Power, and by thy strong Hand: But more fully, Chap. 9. When he is humbling himself before the Lord,

Lord, and deprecating Wrath, he useth this Argument at Large, Verse 9. *And didst see the Affliction of our Fathers in Egypt, and heardest their Cry by the Red Sea.* Verse 10. *And shewedst Signs and Wonders upon Pharaoh, and all his Servants,* — Verse 11. *And thou didst divide the Sea before them, &c.* So Verses 12, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22. So the Church taketh this same Course, *Psal. 44. Verses 1, 2, 3.* They usher in their Prayer with that Consideration, *We have heard with our Ears, O God, our Fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their Days, in the Times of old,* &c. So *Psal. 74. 2. Remember thy Congregation, which thou hast purchased of old, the Rod of thine Inheritance, which thou hast redeemed,* &c. So *Psal. 80. 8, 9. Thou hast brought a Vine out of Egypt,* &c. Upon this same Ground, did Moses plead with God, when his Wrath was kindled against his People, at several Occasions. Faith seeth here Ground of Comfort and Encouragement; for Faith perceiveth here, how God hath formerly shown himself in the Behalf of his People, manifesting his Power for them, in delivering them out of former Troubles; and in bringing them the Length they are now at.

2. Faith, upon God's former working in the Behalf of his People, seeth some Kind of Obligation (to speak so) upon the Lord, to go on, and do yet more for them, especially when the Lord's former Appearances, in their Behalf, have been such, as did speak out to all, that the Lord did own them, as his peculiar People, in a singular Manner; for Faith readeth thereupon Purpose that God had to bring them a further Length; seeing the Works of the Lord are perfect. Thus Moses did plead in the Behalf of the People, *Exod. 23. 11. And Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, O Lord, why doth thy Wrath wax hot against thy People, which thou hast brought forth out of the Land of Egypt? to deliver with great Power, and with a great Hand. Thus will I have* *w*
be further clear from these two Particulars. 1. That d my who

hen once God hath wrought some signal Delivery
or his People, and hath saved them by his strong
Hand, and his out-stretched Arm, his Name standeth
engaged to appear for them again, and again, until
they get a Bill of Divorce, and make it manifest be-
fore all the World, that he owneth them no more
or his People. Hence it is, That *Joshua* did plead
thus with the Lord, Chap. 7. 8, 9. " Oh, Lord,
what shall I say, when *Israel* turneth their Back be-
fore their Enemies ! For the *Canaanites* and all the
Inhabitants of the Land shall hear of it: — And
what wilt thou do unto thy great Name ? He saw
that God's great Name was engaged in the Sight
of the Nations, and that a Reproach would be
wrought up against that Name by the wicked World,
now, after the Lord had done so much for them,
and brought them even within the Land of *Canaan*,
he would not through their possessing of it. 2. The
Lord himself upon Consideration of this doth ap-
pear for his People, when all Ground of Hope else
failleth, *Isai. 63. 11, 12, 13, 14.* " Then he remem-
bered the Days of old, *Moses*, and his People, say-
ing, Where is he that brought them up out of the
Sea, with the Shepherd of his Flock — That
led them by the right Hand of *Moses*, with his glori-
ous Arm, dividing the Water before them, to make
himself an everlasting Name, that led them thorow
the Deep, as an Horse in the Wilderness, that they
should not stumble, &c. This severals conceive
and it seemed most probable) to be spoken by God
himself, remembring what he had done of old ; and
upon the Consideration thereof, resolving to work
new Deliverances for them. God is brought in here
by the Prophet, disputing (as is were) with himself
about the Matter, and saying (as it were) how can
it be, that I should forsake them now, and refuse
to deliver them in their Straits, seeing formerly I
have wrought so much for them, and have manifest-
ed my Power so much in their Behalf ? Not far un-

like is that reasoning of the Lord with himself, Hos
11. 8. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How
shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee
as Admah? How shall I set thee, as Zeboim, mine
Heart is turned within me, my repentings are kin-
dled together: And after this reasoning, the Reso-
lution is, Verse 9 "I will not execute the Fierceness of
mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim,
for I am God and not Man, the holy One, in the
midst of thee, and I will not enter into the City.
And whence did all this flow? See Verses 1, 3, 4.
" When Israel was a Child, then I loved him, — I
taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their
Arms — I drew them with Cords of a Man,
with Bands of Love, &c. The Lord appeared for
them of old, in his Love, Pity, Mercy and Kindness;
and upon this Account, he could not now, when
deliberating with himself what to do, resolve to de-
stroy them. There must then, sure, be some great
Thing in this, That God should so take notice of his
former Manifestations of Power and good Will, to-
ward a People, as to be moved (as it were) by the
Consideration thereof, to stretch forth his Arm
of new, and to appear again in their Behalf.

3. If new Provocations and abused Mercies should
say, The Lord will not always have his Name taken
in vain, and his Works of Power and Grace abused;
and therefore after his former Appearances have been
Misimproven, the Lord will forbear any more:
Yet Faith, though it will readily grant, that the
Lord may do so, and that it were but righteous if
he should do so, will notwithstanding plead former
Experiences, knowing that there was in them, from
the Beginning, sufficient Cause why the Lord should
have made no Appearances for them; and howbeit
he knew, what they would do, yet he was pleased
to work for them then, for his Name's Sake, and upon
make his Power known, and his Glory manifest:
this Faith will say, May not the Lord do so yet for the
Glory

Glossy of his free Grace? Did he work for a sinful People before, and is it not possible, that he may do so again? See how Moses argueth, Numb. 14. 14. *Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this People, according unto the greatness of thy Mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this People, from Egypt even until now.*

4. Faith can draw noble Comfort from former Experiences, upon this Account, that if the Lord should forbear any more so appear in the Behalf of a People, for whom he hath done great Things, in the Sight of the Nations, Enemies would take Occasion therefrom, to blaspheme the Lord and his Work; and that upon a double Account. 1. The Enemies would put a bad and blasphemous Construction upon all that God had done formerly, and say, it was not the Lord, it was not the Work of the Lord, but a Work of wickedness and of Satan; and their former Deliverances were not the Deliverances of God, acting and appearing as their God by Covenant, and seeking their Good and Advantage; but only acts of common Providence, that Enemies to God may meet with: And this giveth noble Advantage to Faith, in pleading with God, as we see in that noble Wrestler Moses, Exod. 32. 11. 12. He besought the Lord, and said, *Why doth thy Wrath wax hot against thy People, &c.* And then addeth, *Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, For Mischief did we bring them out, and slay them in the Mountains, and to consume them from the Face of the Earth?* he saw, that the Mouths of the Adversaries would be opened, and that they would speak blasphemously of God, of his Purposes, and of his Works, and say, *That God intended Mischief against them, and nothing else;* and so was their Enemy, and not their Friend, and a God in covenant with them: And therefore he layeth out his before the Lord, and pleadeth with the Lord on this Account: Faith than can suck Life out of this Consideration. And 2. The Enemies, upon God's forbearing to go on in his Appearances for

his People, would think and say, He were a God that were not able to deliver, and through and perfect his Work, but that his Power were gone and dried up: And thus the blessed Name of the Lord would be blasphemed. Therefore we find the forementioned noble Wrestler, Moses, pleading upon this Ground with the Lord, Numb. 14: 13, 14, 15, 16. " And Moses said unto the Lord, Then the Egyptians shall hear; for thou broughtest up thy People in thy might from among them, and they will tell it to the Inhabitants of this Land; for they have heard, that thou, Lord, art among this People, that thou Lord, art seen Face to Face, and that thy Cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them by Day-time, in a Pillar of a Cloud, and in a Pillar of Fire by night. Now, if thou shalt kill all this People as one Man, then the Nations, which have heard the Fame of thee, will speak, saying Because the Lord was not able to bring this People into the Land, which he sware unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the Wilderness. Then the Enemie would have said, That God had enterprized what he was not able to accomplish, and that he had laid the Foundation, but was not able to put the Cop-stone: We find both these shortly set down Deut. 9. 25, 28. " And I prayed therefore unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, destroy not thy People — lest the Land, whence thou broughtest us out say, Because the Lord was not able to bring them into the Land which he promised them; and because he hated them, he hath brought them out to slay them in the Wilderness.

5. It may contribute to the clearing of this, to consider, that upon the Account, that God hath done much for his People, we find him pressing several Articles of kindness to be done unto them, as Levit. 25, 39, 40, 41. He would not have the poor among them handled as Slaves, but as Servants, or as Sojourners, and that unto the Year of Jubile, & then they were

be sent away free : And this is pressed upon this Ground, Verse 42. " For they are my Servants, which I brought forth out of the Land of Egypt, they shall not be sold as Bondmen. Verse 42. Thou shall not rule over them with Rigour, but shall fear thy God. So again he concludeth, Verse last, for unto me the Children of Israel are Servants ; they are my Servants, whom I brought forth out of the Land of Egypt, I am the Lord, your God.

6. Faith can get such a View of what is wrapped up in the former Appearances of the Lord for his people, that the Soul is in Case to give, as it were, a Defence unto all Trouble that can follow. So Psal. 18. 5. The Psalmist saith, " I called upon the Lord in Distress ; the Lord answered me, and set me in a large Place. This was a refreshful Experiment : and what saith he next upon this ? Verse 6. " The Lord is on my Side I will not fear what Man can do unto me. The like we find, Psal. 27. 1, 2, 3. The Lord is my Light and my Salvation, said the Psalmist, whom shall I fear : The Lord is the Strength of my Life, of whom shall I be afraid, — When the wicked, even mine Enemies and my Foes came upon me, to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Though an Host should encamp against me, my Heart should not fear ; though War should rise against me, in this will I be confident. He remembred, what God had been unto him, and had done for him, and how he made his Enemies stumble and fall, when they came against him, with their greatest Fury and Cruelty ; and therefore, in a Manner, triumpheth over all trouble, as beyond its Reach and Fear. So doth the Church cry out, Psal. 44: 2, 3. I will not fear, though Earth be removed, &c. And what is the Ground of such high Expressions ? God (saith she) is our Refuge and Strength, a Very present help in Trouble. How is this known ? Faith drew this out of former Experiences, Verses 6, 7. The Heathen raged, the Kings were moved ; he uttered his Voice, the Earth melted.

And again, Verses 8, 9. He made Desolations in the Earth.

Thus we see what a Life of Peace, Joy, Hope and Consolation Faith can draw, in an evil Time, from former Experiences ; these giving Ground for such Inferences, as Faith can improve to great Advantage, in wrestling with the Lord by Prayer, as we have seen, and these being registered, and to be remembered, for this End, that we, through a right Improvement of them, might have Comfort, and Ground sufficient, not to infer despondingly ; our Case is desperate and forlorn, and that it is in vain to wait any more upon the Lord ; but on the contrary, that there is yet Hope in Israel ; because there is a Physician there, as skilful and able to help as ever, and there is Balm in Gilead : And notwithstanding of Objections, that might cause Discouragement and Despondency ; yet Faith, upon this Consideration can keep up the Head in Hope, and cause the Soul quietly and patiently to wair, seeing none can say, That the Arm of the Lord is shortened ; and it may be, the Lord magnifie the Riches of his free Grace, in saving a sinful, unworthy People, out of the seventh Trouble, as well as he did, when he delivered them out of six foregoing Troubles. However the Soul by Faith looking to this Ground, may be quieted, and even thus the Soul may enjoy a sweet Life ; while as the giving Way unto Temptation saying, That because the Lord helpeth not now, in this new Trial, all his former Appearances and Works of that Kind have been but Delusions, or the mere Works of men, is a short Cut to undo all, and plunge the Soul in a fearful desperate Despondency, whereby both Hope shall be more dreadfully cut off, in the present Case of the Soul much more distempored, yea, and the Soul put in a Readiness to turn with the Times, and to side with the Workers of iniquity.

CHAP. XI.

CONSIDERATION VI.

Taken from this, that the Quarrel and Controversie is the Lord's, and that it is for his Sake they suffer.

We proceed to mention another Field, where Faith will find Food and Life, in an evil Time, and that is, the Lord's Interest in the Controversie, or Cause for which the People of God are sometimes put to suffer; the Quarrel being the Lord's, in a Manner, more than theirs, giveth Ground for Faith to hope, and to rejoice in Hope; many a Time it is seen, that what the godly are put to suffer, at the Hands of the wicked, is merely upon the Account of their adhering to the Truth, and cleaving unto the Lord, and all his Interests, and not upon the Account of any personal Injuries, which they have done unto any of these Enemies; as the Grounded, the Rise and Spring of all the Persecution, which his People meet with, is upon the Account of their Relation to God, and of their bearing his Name, and looking like his Friends and Followers. this being so manifest and clear both from Scripture, and the Experience of his Church and People, in all Ages, we need not spend Words in confirming of it, in clearing up the Grounds thereof: Our Purpose leadeth us to shew, what Improvement Faith can and may make of this Consideration, in Order to attaining a Life, in an evil and sad Time: In Order to which, we would prem^t these two Things.

1. That we find the Churc^h, and People of God, proving this Argument in their Addresses to God, Psal. 44: 22. Yea for thy Sake are we killed all the Day long, we are counted, as Sheep for the Slaughter, Psal. 69.

Verse 7. Because for thy Sake, I have born Reproach: Shame hath covered my Face So doth Jeremy, Jer. 15. 15. — Know that for thy Sake, I have suffered Rebuke. The Argument used by Joshua, when he was sore distressed; because of the Discomfiture the People got before Ai, and cried out, *What wilt thou do unto thy great Name, had this Import*; for they were following the Lord's Call, in going in to possess that Land, that had been promised by Oath and Covenant unto Abraham, Isaac and Jacob their Posterity; and therein they had met with Opposition, and a shameful Discomfiture, contrair to their Expectations; whereupon he rolleth the Matter over upon God, and taketh him up as Party in the Quarrel, and looketh upon the Enemies, as engaged as well against him, who was the Captain of their Host, and was to go before them, as against them. So Psal. 74: The Church reckoneth up the Wrongs, which were done against them as done against the Lord, and therefore saith, *The Enemies roar in the midst of thy Congregations*, Ver. 4. *They have cast Fire into thy Sanctuary, they have defiled the dwelling-Place of thy Name to the Ground*, Ver. 7. *They have burnt up all the Synagogues of God in the Land*, Verse 8. and again Verses 22, 23. she sendeth up her Petitions in these Terms, *Arise O God, plead thine own Cause, remember how the foolish Man reproacheth thee daily: Forget not the Voice of thine Enemies, the tumult of those that rise up against thee increaseth continually*. So Psal. 79. 1, 2. *O God, the Heathen are come into thine Inheritance, thy holy Temple have they defiled*. — The dead Bodies of thy Servants have they given to be Meat unto the Fowls of the Heaven: The Flesh of thy Saints unto the Beasts of the Earth, &c. So Psal. 83: Ver. 2. *Thine Enemies make a tumult, and they that hate thee have lifted up the Head*. Ver. 5. *For they have consulted together with one Consent, they are confederate against thee*.

2. We find the Lord looking upon himself, as interested in the Matter, and as concerned in the Quarrel, and thereupon engaging to take Course with Enemie

Enemies ; because of his Name, that otherwise might suffer, *Isai. 48. 11.* And therefore he will not have his People, in whom he is concerned, always suffering at the Hands of Enemies, *Isai. 52. Verses 5, 6.*

"Now therefore, what have I here, saith the Lord, that my People is taken away for nought, they that rule over them make them to howl, and my [Name] continually every Day is blasphemed : Therefore my People shall know my Name ; therefore they shall know in that Day, that I am he that doth speak, behold it is I : And if the Lord thinketh himself concerned, when his People are suffering at the Hands of Enemies, though Enemies are not persecuting them upon the Account of their adhering to the Lord, and Cause ; how much more, will he think himself interessed in their Sufferings, when they are pressed with them purely for his Sake, and because they are adhering to him, and to his Truth ?

Let us now see particularly what Improvement faith can make of this, and what Sap and Life it can draw out of it.

1. God being interessed in the Quarrel, Faith seeth and saith, That he is an Adversary to the Adversaries, and not the poor weak People alone ; and that Enemies have to do with the great God, as their Party ; and Faith can easily draw from this, a Ground of Hope, that all will be well, seeing stronger is he, who is with them, than all who are against them. *Asa* upon this Ground did plead well with God, *2 Chron. 14. 11.*

O Lord, (saith he) thou art our God ; let not man prevail against thee. He took up God, as a Party against those *Ethiopians*, that were come against him, and thereupon got Ground to Faith to stand upon, when he was sending up his Request. And what came of it ? The Lord smote the *Ethiopians* before *Asa*, *Ver. 2.* and they fled, though an host of a Thousand thousand, and three hundred Chariots, *Verse 9.*

2. Faith seeth, and rationally inferreth, That if the Quarrel be God's, it will concern him and his Glory,

so see to his own Interest, and to appear for his own Cause : Faith will see him engaged to arise and plead his own Cause. Joash said of Baal, Judg. 6. 31. If Baal be a God, let him plead for himself ; because one hath thrown down his Altar. And seeing (saith Faith) our God is a God, and the only true God, he will undoubtedly plead for himself. When that railing Letter came to Hezekiah's Hands, he spreadeth it before the Lord, and taketh up God, as Party concerned in the Business ; and therefore saith, That the Man came to reproach the living God. And accordingly God interested himself as a Party, 2 King 19, Verses 27, 28. I^{sai}. 37. 28, 29. And said by the Prophet I^{sai}. " I know thine Abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy Rage against me ; because thy Rage against me, and thy Tumult is come up into mine Ears ; therefore I will put my Hook into thy Nose, and my Bridle into thy Lips, and I will turn thee back by the Way, by which thou camest.

3. Faith can hence infer, That certainly the Lord will appear and plead his own Cause, in his own due Time, and determine in the Behalf of Truth ; and the Cause in Question being such, as nearly concerneth himself, and his own Glory, no doubt, he will arise for it, saith Faith. If a Cause come before a righteous Judge, he will decide for Truth ; and if it concern himself, there is more Ground of Hope that the Decision will be in Truths Favours : Now God is the righteous Judge, and to him, and to his Determination do his People appeal, and cry to him to plead their Cause. Psal. 35. 1. and 43. 1. and 119. 354. 1 Sam. 24. 15. Psal. 35. Verse 23. And their Cause he will plead, Jer. 50. 43. Psal. 140. 12. I^{sai} 31. 22. And when Faith seeth, that the Lord is not only engaged to plead their Cause, as a righteous Judge who abhorreth unrighteous Sentences among Men but also upon the Account of his own Interest ; how will it triumph in Hope ; and rest confident, that he

long so ever the Lord's last Court-day should be delayed, yet a Decision will come from his Tribunal at length, in Favours of that righteous Cause?

4. Faith seeth, that if the Lord should but delay too long to plead for Truth, upon the Account of which, his People are suffering, the Truth it self would fall under Doubts and Debates: That God's own People would be in Hazard to question the same, if the Enemie still enjoyed Prosperity; and to think that they had an evil Cause, and suffered not for Righteousness Sake; for (would they be ready to think) were this Cause the Cause of God, could it be, that he would stand by and look on, when he seeth Enemies trampling all under Foot, overturning his Work and Interest; and not put to his Hand to right Matters? Enemies likewise would conclude, That God were upon their Side, and favoured their Cause; because they prospered in their Undertakings, and say with that wicked Man, 2 Kings 18. 15. *Am I come up without the Lord against this Place to destroy it? the Lord said to me, Go up against this Land to destroy it.* He prospered in his Undertakings against other Nations and People, and he hence concluded, That God was upon his Side, and was with him in this Expedition. Strangers also and Onlookers would be ready to conclude the same, and say, If it were the Cause of God, that such were owning and suffering for, would the Lord suffer them to be so oppressed and crushed under Foot continually? Upon all which Considerations Faith will see Ground of Hope; that the Lord will at length favour their righteous Cause, and appear in its Defence.

5. Especially considering withall, that usually, when the Lord's People are suffering hardly at the Hands of the wicked, upon the Account of their Honesty and Faithfulness, the Cause and Truth of God, for which they suffer, lyeth under a Load of Obloquie and Reproach; for then are the Mouths of open Enemies, and of Nouters, that never wished well

well to the Cause, wide opened, many Blasphemies uttered; so that the Day is really a Day of Blasphemy and of Reproach; and in that Case, the great Name of God is made to suffer, and is injured and blasphemed: And this giveth no small Ground of Hope; for the Lord will not ly long under that heavy Load, but will vindicate his Name, and the Cause which is now reproached, & so much spoken against; and so will take some Course, whereby the Goodness and Justness of the Cause, for the Maintenance of which his People are put to hard Sufferings, may openly appear, and the Enemies be found Liars, in raising such Calumnies against the same. God will be tender of his own Glory, and see to the Vindication of his Name; and upon this his People may conceive Hope, that they shall not always ly under those Aspersions; but that the Day shall come, wherein their Innocency shall appear and break forth as the Light, and God shall visibly own them and their Cause, and plead it out against their Enemies, in the View of the World, by some signal Delivery, in his own good Time.

6. This Consideration will give Faith Ground enough to conclude, that the Cause for which his People now suffer, shall be prosperous and victorious: Howbeit now they are worsted in this or that particular Skirmish and Rencounter; yet the Victory, in the hinder End of the Day, shall be on their Side. What Joy will it yield, and what Courage, to Soldiers, to know before Hand that the Day shall be theirs, and that they shall at length prevail over all their Enemies? How will this animate them and comfort them against small Disasters here or there? And will not this thought standing upon an infallible Ground of Certainty, cause the oppressor Man to sing, and say, Though I have a hard Load, and am worsted and trode under Foot; yet ere all be done, the Victory shall be ours, we shall sing the triumphant Song, our Side shall undoubtedly carry the day, for the Lord Jehovah is the Captain of our Host,

is engaged, the Quarrel is his, and more his than ours: And though for holy and wise Ends, he suffereth here or there a small Party to be routed or scattered; yet the Matter is so managed, and the Battel is ordered with such a Conduct, that we shall keep the Fields, and all the Enemies shall be broken in Pieces, and be for ever defeat.

7. Seing the Lord is interessed in the Quarrel, and the Cause, for which his People are suffering, is his, Faith may, with good Ground, hence infer, That he will not forget them in their Afflictions and Sufferings: Since they are suffering upon his Account, and in his Quarrel, they need not fear, that he shall turn his Back upon them, in that Condition. No Man of Generosity, or of common Discretion, will forget his Servant, when he is put to sad Sufferings, upon his Account, and for adhering to him, and to his Cause faithfully: And may we not be assured, that the Lord will be as tender of his Honour and Credit, as any Man would be? Therefore we may be assured, that for his Name and Honour's Sake, he will not turn his Back upon his suffering Servants, when they are suffering for their Faithfulness to him, and for owning his Quarrel. When the Church, *Psal. 44.* is wrestling with sad Afflictions and Sufferings, and praying that God would not forget her, nor hide his Face from her, nor forget her Affliction and Oppression, *Verse 24.* she useth this Argument, among others, *Verse 22.* *For thy Sake are we killed all the Daylong.* Their suffering for his Sake, gave them Ground to expect, that he would lift up upon them the Light of his Countenance, and cause his Face Shine upon them, and not forget them in their Affliction and Oppression, so *Jeremiah*, when he is praying that God would remember him, and visit him in his Affliction, he useth this Argument, *Know that for thy Sake, I have suffered Rebuke.* *Jeremiah 15. Verse 15.* Whence we see, that this Consideration giveth great Ground of Hope, that God will not forget his afflicted People, when they

they are suffering upon his Account, and for adhering faithfully to him.

8. Seeing the Cause, for which they suffer, is the Lord's; then his People may rest confident, that 1. The Lord doth and will own them in their Sufferings: It is no small Ground of Comfort, unto poor Believers to know, that when they are suffering any Thing at the Hands of Man, they are approved and accepted of the Lord therein; how light would this make all their otherwise heavy Sufferings? How comfortable and refreshing would this prove? Now, when they consider that the Quarrel is the Lord's, that it is for his Sake they are suffering, and are sore persecuted, may they not be confident, that he accepteth that as good Service off their Hands, and approveth them in these Sufferings? 2. They may be confident, that he will carry them thorow, and support them under their Sufferings; and that he will bear their Charges, and lay all Necessaries to their Hands: he will have no Man running his Errands, upon their own Charges: Will any Man forget, and not provide for his Servant, who is cast in Prison, and mishandled for his Sake? And will the Lord be less tender of such as suffer for him than Men will be of such as suffer for them? O what a Strengthening Consideration is this, that yieldeth Ground to expect Light from the Lord, in the Day of their Darkness; Strength and Reviving, when they begin to faint; Courage and Resolution, when Enemies appear terrible!

9. The Thoughts of this, that it is the Lord's Quarrel upon which they are suffering may fill their Hearts with Gladness, and their Mouths with a Song. What an Honour must that be unto poor Worms, that they are called forth to suffer upon such an Account! How may the Soul feed with Joy upon these Thoughts! O! who am I, that ever the Lord should have graced me a Being in the World, and honoured me to suffer, while in that Being, for himself, and upon the Account of his Truth? Who am I, that I

should put that Honour upon me, to bear Witness to him, and to his Truth and Interest? Whence is this to me, that the great God should imbark me into his quarrel, and make me a Fellow-sufferer with himself? Yea how may I rejoice, that ever I had a Life and Being, to lose and lay down for such a glorious Cause; even a Life, that I was under a Necessity however to lose, after a few Days? How, I say, may these and the like Thoughts cheer up the Soul, and fill it with Gladness, and cause him rejoice, with the Apostles, that he is counted worthy to suffer upon such an Account.

10. This may give Boldness and Confidence, in their Approaches to God, whether in Reference to themselves, or in Reference to their Enemies: With what cheerful Boldness may they draw nigh to God, and ask of him what is necessary for their Support and Through-bearing, when they may say unto the Lord, that it is his Cause, upon which they are suffering, and that his Honour and Glory is concerned in their honest Carriage and Through-bearing, seeing the Quarrel is his. What may they not seek, and hope to obtain, that is necessary for their Support, in such an honourable Cause, that concerneth the Lord so nearly? And then in Reference to Enemies, how may they hold them up, and all their Ways, before the Lord, when they have Ground to think and say, Lord, these are thine Enemies, they are plundering, pillaging, imprisoning, wounding and killing us, all the Day long, for thy Sake: It is for thy Sake, and for our owning of and adhering to thee, that all this is devised and cruelly executed against us?

11. Is the Controversie the Lord's, and are they open his Account questioned, impanneled and condemned, then they may be assured, that in due Time, God shall annul all these unjust and iniquous sentences; and their Innocency shall appear as the Light; their Sentence will come forth from his presence, whose Eyes behold the Things that are

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right, *Psal. 27. 2.* They may now be condemned as Traitors, and many Things may be now falsely charged upon them, and they put to suffer upon these false Suppositions and Accusations ; but when God's grand Court Day cometh, all these wrong Sentences will be found to have been Sentences against the Lord himself, and his Interest : And Wo then will be to such, as will be found, in that Day, to have condemned the innocent, and faithful Owners of the Lord and his Interest. And what though Men judge them now, and give out wrong Sentences against them : The Lord will not condemn them when they are judged, *Psal. 37. 33.* And if the Lord justifie (as he will justifie the Man that is suffering upon his Account) who can condemn, or what Matter who shall condemn ? *Ibai. 50. 9. Rom. 8. 33, 34.* It is the Portion of the wicked and of deceitful Men, who speak against the Just with a lying Tongue, and compass them about with Words of Hatred, to be condemned when they are judged, *Psal. 109. 2, 7.* But there is some other Outgate awaiting the faithful Followers of the Lord, whatever be their Lot in a sinful and wicked World ; the Faith whereof should be enough to bear up their Hearts, and to cause them sing, even when judged and condemned by Men, is the greatest of evil Doers, and the worst of Malefactors,

C H A P. XII.

CONSIDERATION VII.

The Sufferings of Believers, for the Cause of Christ, are Christ's Sufferings.

THIS Consideration, being of so near a Kin with the foregoing, and therefore serving to clear

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It is but too ordinary for the Children of God, to suspect the worst, when they are put to suffer, one Way or another, for the Cause of Christ, and to think, that as they are forgotten of Men, so are they forgotten of the Lord; and as Men have but slender Thoughts of them, and of their Sufferings; so they are ready to think, that Christ valueth them at a low rate: And this maketh their Heart sad; and thereupon their Affliction becometh a double Affliction. Whereas were they once perswaded, that Christ took any notice of, or had any Esteem for their Sufferings, and looked upon them as his own; this would yield them much Matter of Joy and Comfort, under all their sad Sufferings, and did they once see, that in their Sufferings for he Truth, they were imbarkeed with the Lord Jesus, and stood and fell with him, (as it were) all other Discouragements would be easily wrestled over, and the Burden it self would be light to bear.

For affording then a Life of Strength, Joy, Hope and Confidence unto Believers, while suffering sad Things in a World, for their Faithfulness to Jesus Christ, there is this Ground of Encouragement given by Peter, 1 Peter 4. 13. But rejoice in as much as you are Partakers of Christ's Sufferings. Is not this wonderful, that the petty and inconsiderable Sufferings of poor Wretches should be so valued, and so much thought of, as to be called *the Sufferings of Christ*, or Part of them. So Col. 3. Verse 24. Paul tells us, That this was Ground of Joy to him and others, who now rejoice (saith he) in my Sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the Afflictions of Christ in my Flesh, for my Bodies Sake, which is the Church, a very remarkable expression, giving us to understand, that his Afflictions were Part of the Afflictions of Christ; and that thereby he was filling up what was resting and remaining behind of them. So a Cor. 1. 5. speaking of the Tribulations, which he and others were under, he calleth them *the Sufferings of Christ*: And though

though they may be so called ; because they were endured for the Cause of Christ ; yet the Expression would seem by its Emphasis to hint some Thing further. *Heb. 11. 25, 26.* the Suffering of Afflictions with the People of God, is called *the Reproach of Christ.* *2 Cor. 4. 10.* always bearing about in the Body the dying of the Lord Jesus.

In speaking a little unto this, we shall, 1. Shew in what Respects it is true, that the Sufferings of Believers for the Cause of Christ, can be said to be the Sufferings of Christ; or they, upon that Account, said to be Partakers of Christ's Sufferings and Reproach. And, 2. Shew how Faith may improve this Consideration, for a Life, in an evil Time.

As to the First of these, it must necessarily be observed, That there is a vast Difference betwixt the Sufferings, which Christ, in the Days of his Humiliation, did undergo, and the Sufferings of his Members : So that while it is said, That Believers, in their Sufferings, upon his Account, are Partakers of Christ's Sufferings, it must not be thought, their Sufferings are of the same Nature and Kind, with his Mediator, and as they were laid upon him by the Lord : For Christ Jesus, by his Sufferings was to satisfy the Justice of God for Sin ; and as to this, he trode the Wine-press of God's Wrath alone, and of the People there were none with him : Wherefore in this Work of Redemption and Satisfaction, he will have none to share with him, in the Glory that is due, upon that Account ; for he made full Satisfaction to the Law, and to the Law-giver : And therefore whatever his Followers suffer, or can suffer upon his Account, can add nothing unto the Sufferings of Christ ; by one Offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified, *Heb. 10.* Verse 14. Neither must we have any such Thoughts of our Sufferings, lest all be in vain.

To the Question, therefore, how we can be said to be Partakers of Christ's Sufferings; or how the Suffering

ings of Believers for his Sake, can be called Christ's Sufferings, and Christ's Reproach? We shall answer, that this may be understood in these Respects.

1. In Respect of that close Union, which is betwixt Christ and them: He is the Head, and they are the Members, they make one Mystical Christ, *1 Cor. 12. 13.* *As the Body is one, and hath many Members; so also is Christ:* Upon this Account, as the Head is sensible of every Hurt or Sore, that any Member of the Body is under; so the Head Christ is sensible of, and touched with the Wrongs done to the least Member of his Mystical Body: And therefore what his Members do suffer, as such, that is, upon his Account, or because they are Members of him, and desire to carry as his Members, he accounts himself to suffer; and these Afflictions are Christ's Afflictions: He and they being one spiritual Body, are also one Spirit, as Man and Wife are one Flesh; and therefore, as what Wrongs are done to the Wife, the Husband accounteth to be done to himself; because they are one, so the Sufferings of Believers, and their Reproaches are the Sufferings and Reproaches of Christ.

2. In Respect of that Sympathy ('whereof we spoke before') that is betwixt Christ and his Members whereby it cometh to pass, that he feeleth the Wrongs done to his Members. In their Afflictions, he is afflicted, *Isai. 63. 9.* While Saul was persecuting the Church, he was persecuting Christ, *Act. 9.* He that toucheth them toucheth the Apple of Christ's Eye, *Zech. 2. 8.* Their Afflictions then becoming his after this Manner, all which they suffer, as his, and upon the Account of their owing of and adhering to him, may well be called the Sufferings of Christ.

3. In Respect that the Afflictions, which we suffer, upon his Account, and for his Sake, are more his, in a Manner, than ours, as reflecting upon him, more than upon us: As the wronging of a Nobleman's Foot-boy, upon the Account of his Master, is looked upon as a direct wrong done to the Nobleman, and it is intenti-

onally done to affront him ; and therefore as he can not but look upon it, as an Injury done to him ; so this Grief that he hath at the wrong done may be greater, and may endure longer than all the Grief, that the Suffering Foot-boy had ; neither are the Sufferings of the Foot-boy his Sufferings alone ; but as it were, a Part of the Sufferings of his Master, which are much more considerable. Or as the wrong done to a Subje&t by a foreign Enemy, is looked upon by the King, as a Wrong done to himself, the wrong being done to the Person ; because a Subject to such a King ; and can become the Ground of a lasting Controversie, if Reparation be not made ; for it is looked upon, as an Indignity unto the King and State ; and they suffer thereby, as well as the injured Person, yea more ; for his Loss can sooner be repaired than theirs. Now Christ is our King, and when any of his Subjects are put to suffer ; because they are his Subjects, the King is more wronged, than they can be ; the Injury is mainly done to him, and is purely out of Spleen and ill Will against him ; for if any Man loved him that begat, they would love him also that is begotten ; and if the World hate us, Christ hath told us, that it hated him first : Yea it is Hated to Christ that maketh them persecute his Members. And therefore their Sufferings are manifestly Christ's Sufferings, and more his, in a Manner, than their own because principally his.

4. In Respect, that Christ is the Main : But the Adversaries shoot at ; and thus interpretatively, our Sufferings are Christ's Sufferings ; yea, they are his mainly ; for through the Sides of Believers, it is Christ, whom Adversaries are seeking to hurt, and ruin, if they could ; for the main, if not the only Cause of all their Wrath and Rancour against the poor Members, is their Hated of the Head, and their Envy against him : If they were not related to him, and looked not like him, if they were not Followers of him, and did not own him and his Interest, the Enemies of the Lord of Life would never trouble them.

them: So that it is manifest, that it is mainly Christ against whom they level; and therefore it is Christ that is mainly the Sufferer; and the persecuted Members have but a Share of his Sufferings, and that but in a small Measure.

5. In Regard that, as to Men, the Cause for which Christ was put to Suffering, in the Days of his Flesh, and his Members are now put to suffer, is one and the same, upon the Matter; so that both Head and Members are concerned in one and the same Quarrel. In a confederate Society, what is done to one, upon the Account of that Confederacy, or because he belongeth thereunto, is construed as done to all, the Quarrel being common to all, and it being that Quarrel, for Maintenance of which they have associate themselves together. It is manifest then, how the Sufferings of Believers, for Righteousness Sake, are the Sufferings of Christ; because to the Devil, and as to Men his Instruments, the Cause is one and the same, wherefore they persecuted Christ, and now persecute his Members and Followers.

6. In Regard that he hath gone the same Way before us: We suffer nothing but what he hath suffered already before us; and thus are we Partakers of his Sufferings, when we follow him through the Straits, thorow which he hath gone before us, when we thus share of his Lot, and follow the Copy which he hath casten unto us, and are made conform unto him, according to that, Rom. 8. 29. For whom he did know, he also did Predestinate to be conformed to the Image of his Son, that he might be the first-born amongst my Brethren. Our Sufferings are but a very rude Image after his Pattern and Copy. We bear about in Body the dying of the Lord Jesus, when we are following Suffering, and dying Christ; suffering as he did, bearing about us a dying, suffering, tormented, troubled, distressed, downcasten and persecuted Body; as we bear about in the Body, though in a weak,

ill drawn After-copy, the dying of our Lord, and are made conform unto Christ, and Partakers of his Sufferings, drirk of his Cup, and are baptiz'd with the Baptism that he was baptiz'd with, Mat. 20. 23.

7. In Respect, that the only wise God hath determined and appointed, how much Affliction the mystical Body of Christ shall suffer at the Hands of Devils and Men, in their Heat of Persecution and Malice, so that there is a Cup of Afflictions to be filled up by Christ and his Followers, and every Member must have their Share ; and so fill up that which is behind of the Sufferings of Christ.

As to the Second Particular. It is manifest and clear that hence Faith may draw out the Life of Joy, and Consolation, Strength and Hope: And the Soul, acting Faith on this Ground, may live a noble Life of super abounding Joy; and that upon many Account's.

8. That hereby they are made conform to their Lord and Master: And is it not Honour enough that the Servant be as his Master ? Is it not great Honour for the Servant to be clothed with the Masters Livery, to be wearing a Garment like his though it be dipt in Blood ? Herein, Believers being made conform unto their Head and elder Brother, have great Cause of Rejocing, in that Love manifested to them therein, and in that Honour conferred upon them thereby. Ought they not to rejoice, in as much as they are made Partakers of Christ Sufferings ?

2. In that hereby, they may know, that the Way is prepared for them ; he having gone before them hath made the Way easie. He is gone before us, and hath gone thorow all these Afflictions, Miseries, Persecutions, Hardships, yea, and Death it self: And thereby hath paved the Way to all his Followers, and blunted the Edge of these deadly Weapons: He hath gone thorow these Pikes, and they are all broken upon him, so that his Followers have an easie Passage of it now : He had the Curse, which was the first

Edge and Poison of these Weapons to endure; and his Sting is taken out of all these Evils that his Followers meet with; so that whatever they are, as to their first Rise, and in themselves considered; yet to them, they are managed by the Hand of Love and Mercy, and suggared with loving Kindness, and run in the Channel of Covenant-Love. Christ hath born the Burnt of the Battel, and the sharpest of the Storm, the Hail of the Curse and Wrath of God was upon him; so that the Ice being thus broken, his Followers have an easie Part, and need not fear to follow him; yea, may rejoice to follow such a Captain, who levelleth the Way to all his Followers. He had an ill made Bed, but he hath made it soft and easie to all his Followers, who may now herein find, where he did ly, and what a fragrant smell of Love he hath left behind him.

In that, all his Followers have sure Ground of hope, upon this very Account, that they are following him, and suffering upon his Account, and for the Cause, that they shall not want his helping, strengthening and comforting Hand; he will lend them every lift, and a good Lift too, he is bearing the Burden well as they; yea he is bearing the heaviest Part of the Load, yes, he is bearing them and it both. A wrestling Believer supposeth, (but through a like) that he is left alone, and is wrestling with the Burden of Afflictions his alone; and that he is bearing all the Reproach his alone; and he knoweth not, seeth not, that Christ's Back is under the Burden, than his own. When the Hand or Foot is sore pained, doth it suffer alone? Is thy Head or Heart taking no Share thereof? Is thine Head or Heart as little moved thereat, or affected therewith, as the Head or Heart of a Stranger? No, truly, thy Head is busie to find out Means to ease him, and to help it away; and every Touch of Hart, stoundeth thee to the Heart. And shall Members of a Body of Clay, mutually sympathize

thize with and help one another? And shall there not be a far more strong and considerable Sympathy betwixt Christ the Head, and all his Members? This then must be very refreshing and comfortable, to know that Christ is bearing the Burden with us groaning (as it were) under the Load with us. We need not fear, that he will suffer us to sink under the Burden; he knoweth our Weakness, he knoweth how little we are able to bear, and will lay no more on than he knoweth we are able to bear.

4. In that all his Followers, and Sufferers for his Sake, may have full Assurance of Faith, upon the Account, that they are his Sufferings, that he will nobly bear their Charges, and make up their Losses. When a great Man's Servant is beaten or wounded for his Sake, he looks upon himself as engaged in Point of Honour, to have a tender Care of that Servant, and to provide all Necessaries for him, and to be at the Expences of causing cure his Wounds, and making up his Losses, yea, and in Point of Generosity, to do much more than make up his Losses. And shall not the Believer expect, that Christ shall do as generously with him, as the most generous Person in the World would do with such, as suffer any Evil for their Sake? Certainly Christ will do as good as his Word, and his Promises shew rich Generosity. He will give the hundred Pounds here, and everlasting Life hereafter, that is the Glory of a King: He will supply all their Wants, according to his Riches in Glory.

5. And then they may rejoice upon this Account, that hereby, seeing they are suffering for his Sake, partaking of his Sufferings, they may approach to him with Confidence and Boldness to ask of a full Supply of their Wants; and look upon him every Way engaged, both in Point of Honour and Faithfulness, to lay all Necessaries to their Hand. If they want Light in some Particular, they may, with Confidence, ask it of him; who is given for a Light,

to his People : When new Troubles assault, or new Fears come, new Temptations present themselves, new and fresh Enemies set on ; and their Strength and Resolution beginneth to decay, and their Heart and Courage beginne. h to fail ; then may they, and should they run to the Captain, at whose Back, and for whose Sake they suffer all these things, to seek new and fresh Relief and Supply of throw-bearing Strength, that they may be able to stand fast in the Faith, and to quite themselves like Men, in following such a Leader.

6. The very Apprehension of Christ suffering with them, may yeild much Joy and Comfort, and cause them to rejoice in their Lot, how hard so ever it be : What Joy is it to know, that when they are for Christ's Sake put to lesser spoiling of their Goods, beating, wounding, imprisonment, Confinement, Confiscation of Goods, Loss of all they have, &c. Christ is not only suffering these Evils, in and through them ; but is also himself with them, bearing a great Share of these Sufferings ; and is, as it were suffering the same Evils himself, bearing as it were, plundered with them, imprisoned with them, brought to a Scaffold with them. How may the Soul, upon the very Consideration of this, that he hath Company and such Company, in all his Tribulations, rejoice with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory ?

Such may have a comfortable and joyful Life, in which they may be assured it shall go well with them in Christ ! Is Christ in the Sea-tossed Vessel with them, why need not fear Ship-wreck : Is Christ imbarqued with them, they shall not perish : Storms cannot drown them over. They and Christ must die and live together, howbeit then, they meet with many sad and troublous Blasts, they shall land safe at Length : Though they have many hot Skirmishes, and many bloody battles, and get many Wounds and Blows, yet at length they shall be victorious, and be made to wear the Victory-Crown. Hence it is said, If we suffer with him

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we shall also be glorified together. Rom. 8. 17, and again,
2 Tim. 2. 11. 12. It is a faithful saying; for if we be
dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer,
we shall also reign with him. What, and must the poor
Believers, that let their Life, for Christ's sake, find it,
yea find such a Life, a Life with Christ? Must the
Sufferers reign, and reign with him? O how may the
Faith and Consideration of this fill the Soul with Joy,
seeing the Day is coming, whereon they shall be glad
with exceeding Joy; and that, when his Glory, of whose
Sufferings they are now made Partakers, shall be reveal-
ed. 1 Pet. 4. ver. 13.

8 Upon this Account, may the Suffers for Christ
have a sweet and comfortable Life of Joy, that their
Afflictions, upon this Account, are kindly Evidences of
their belonging to the Head, and to that Body: Their
sharing of the Lor, that is peculiar and proper unto
that mystical Christ, Head and Body, may loose their
Doubts, touching their Interest in the same. There is
a Measure of Trouble, that must go over the whole
Body, and when they are under these Damps and Fis,
they may see to what Body they belong: And this is
comfortable and refreshing: Believe that it is also no
small Honour to them, that their Drop must contribute
to that Cup of Sufferings, which the mystical Body
must fill up, and that they must come in with their Part
of what is yet behind, in the sufferings of Christ.

9 This Consideration may also contribute unto their
comfortable Life. That seeing Christ is suffering in
them, and with them, their Enemies are looked on by
him, as his Enemies; and all the Evils threatened
against the Enemies of Christ shall befall such, as per-
secute them, for Christ's Sake: They may hold them
up unto God, as, devoured unto Destruction, upon
the Account of their being fixed and irreconcileable
Enemies to Christ. They need not imprecate evil
upon them: For Christ as Mediator, hath done that alre-
ady, and will be heard in what he hath desired: All
the Imprecations, that we see in David's Psalms, are

to be looked upon as done by him, as Type of Christ: His Sufferings at the Hand of his Enemies being typical, his Enemies were his Enemies: And therefore what he did impetrare to come upon them; was, as they were the Mediators Enemies, and as Enemies to him, as the Mediator's Type; and so all these are but Pieces of the Mediator's Vengeance, and of what must be done unto them, as the Mediator's Enemies: And Believers, as the Mediator's Friends, and suffering upon the Mediator's Account, he had no more to do, but to say Amen to all these; but hope, and wait in hope, for their Accomplishment in due Time. So that all their present Prosperity should not much trouble the Sufferers, for they may know, that their Day is coming, and all these Evils, which are both foretold and denounced upon them, shall take Effect,

10. This may yeild Matter of Comfort, upon this Account, that howbeit others do little value their Sufferings, and howbeit, instead of speaking friendly and comfortably unto them, they be adding Grief to their Sorrow, accounting them to suffer as Fools, and not upon the Account of Righteousness: Yet, Christ hath another Value of their Afflictions; he looketh upon them as his Sufferings: Tho' others may be little troubled at, or concerned in the Pain of thy Hand or Foot, and may think light of it, yet thou knows thy self how great the Pain is, and thou cannot forget it: And no more can Christ forget, or think light of thy Sufferings for his sake, because they are his own; the Sufferings of his own Body. He will pity and beweep thy Case, when others, it may be, shall stand aloof from thy Sore, because he knoweth it in a special Manner, for it is his own.

11. This Consideration will also animate unto a right Deportment and Carriage under the Affliction; for when they consider that they are Partakers of Christ's sufferings, and that they are filling up that which is wanting of the Sufferings of Christ; they will see themselves

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selves called to to carry, and so to walk under their Troubles and Temptations, as that the Lord their Master, of whose Sufferings they are made Partakers, may not be dishonoured, and the Church may receive no Detriment; I mean, the Church which is his Body, for whose Sake these Afflictions should be willingly endured, as Paul did. 2 Tim. 2. 10. Where he said, *Therefore I endure all Things for the Elect's sake, that they may also obtain the Salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal Glory.* And upon this double Account they will see themselves called to suffer with Joy, Courage, Constancy, Faithfulness, Holiness, Self-denial, Patience and Perseverance, that hereby the Lord may be exalted, the Body of Christ edified, and Enemies no ways encouraged. Yea, our Sufferings being the Sufferings of Christ, layeth this Obligation upon us, that we endeavour to follow his Example. Did he endure the Cross and despise the Shame? so should we. Did he witness a good Confession before Pontius Pilate, when arraigned upon his Life? so should we, when called before Kings and Governours for his sake. Did he not revile again when he was reviled? no more should we. When he suffered, did he not threaten, but commit himself to him that judgeth righteously? we should follow his Steps, and thus in all Things declare by our carriage, that what we are suffering are the Offerings of Christ indeed. And this same Consideration may encourage such Sufferers to go and seek of Christ what is necessary for their being carried thro', so as all may see that their Sufferings are his Suffering indeed, that he may thereby be glorified, others edified, and they comforted.

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